

How To...

Estimating is a fast paced high performance role within the bodyshop. We asked a range of estimating system suppliers or training experts to tell us how they can assist both the technicians doing the estimates, the bodyshop managers balancing their books, and the motorist - who all want their vehicle/s turned round quickly and immaculately first time.



Frank Harvey, Pro-Assess
Estimating Systems,
The VDA & Training
Quite often we hear that the times obtained for 'Estimating Systems'

are too tight, I would challenge this and ask, are those undertaking the assessment being given an appropriate amount of time to do their job to the best of their ability, are they allowed time to inspect vehicles properly, are they allowed time research and understand the most appropriate repair method, are they supported by other areas of the business to say have a vehicle partially stripped to enable to them see all of the damage, are they encouraged to revisit the vehicle during the repair process to ensure they 'got it right'.

To help bodyshops with this process, we at Pro-Assess Ltd. offer several training programmes, ranging from digital imaging training, ATA VDA preparation and new for 2012, Bodyshop Manager training.

With the correct approach within the business, training can be free, because appropriate training, professionally managed more than pays for itself. To achieve this, first training needs have to be identified for all staff within the business, any training undertaken must be appropriate to the individuals job role, pre and post training reviews must be in place to ensure it is appropriate, applied and beneficial to the business.

In most cases this is rarely, if ever done, training is usually undertaken grudgingly, often selected on price and location and very rarely is any form of post training review or evaluation undertaken to establish the benefits to the business.

Good quality, professionally delivered and relevant training IS an investment, and should be viewed as such, as a business you wouldn't spend several hundred pounds on a piece of equipment and not get upset if it never got used, so training should be viewed the same way, you must ensure that what has been learned is used once you have paid for it.

'People, Process, Training – Profit'

5 Minutes with New Glassmatix Chief

Currently, repairers are facing unprecedented commercial pressures and rising costs, and they need to be able to control these factors and overheads whilst still maintaining agreed SLA's. It can be difficult, estimating plays a fast paced, high performance role within the bodyshop, and repairers always need to be thinking of the next step.

2. Technicians doing estimates, bodyshop managers balancing books and customers all want their vehicle turned round quickly and immaculately first time – how does your product help with this?

GlassMatix can assist bodyshops in controlling these factors while still maintaining service level agreements. All estimates are produced locally and so the need for remote servers is removed. Estimates can also be produced on the road without the need for internet access. The system has a free vehicle registration look-up VRM, allowing the estimator fast and accurate vehicle selection. All of these factors mean time savings, which is really important.

It also offers a number of other benefits:

- GlassMatix software has a very logical workflow/journey, which makes the process simpler for technicians. Times are based on researched Thatcham times, producing accurate, auditable estimates, and the system also includes Partbasegraphics for fast and easy selection, allowing right 'first time' estimating.
- If GlassMatix is used in conjunction with Evaluator (for which an additional licence is required) potential Total losses are easily identified, allowing the estimate to be adjusted to turn into a repair or to speed up the process of 'writing off', which helps assist in

courtesy car utilisation.

- It can link into Thatcham's e-Scribe* enabling the estimator to produce fast accurate methods packs for the workshop (PAS125).
- Costs to produce an estimate are only incurred if transmitted electronically to a work provider using GlassMatix; there are no charges for images. All other estimates produced do not incur any costs, helping to control budgets and spending.
- GlassMatix can produce all documentation required; this can be printed, saved as PDF or emailed directly from the system.
- GlassMatix also links seamlessly to all of the major Bodyshop Management systems.

All of these benefits of using GlassMatix combine to offer a very positive solution for bodyshops in helping them to run a smooth and efficient estimating process, which helps internally in terms of time and cost savings, and ultimately delivers happy customers.

With ever-evolving vehicle technologies, new training standards and increasing customer expectations, the bodyshop environment is changing immeasurably. This has a direct impact on VDAs, and a better understanding of what can be done to support this key bodyshop role is essential to ensuring estimating quality and efficiency.

Estimating Efficiency Programme

Audatex UK has lead the way on Estimating Efficiency with a Programme to help bodyshops and the motor claims community identify ways in which estimating practices can be streamlined and the efficiency of the VDA and Engineer improved. Central to the programme is research among Audatex' customers on potential new estimating system requirements to enable a more cost-effective and efficient process.

Over recent months Audatex has worked with its Advisory Board and Technical Committee to prioritise software developments in order to deliver the most value to the estimating process, and the latest versions of the company's AudaEnterpriseGold estimating solution have introduced:

- Dynamic Display graphics to improve the damage capture process

- Colour coded graphics for more accurate material type identification
 - Plausibility functionality to validate vehicle model and option selections
- Audatex is now moving into the second phase of the Programme, working with members of the Advisory Board and Technical Committee to identify opportunities to improve the efficiency of activities surrounding estimate creation, such as the job instruction process.



“With the launch of the latest versions of AudaEnterpriseGold, we’ve enabled a series of operational and process improvements that have had an

immediate and very positive effect on estimating efficiency for our customers,” explained **Paul Sykes, Sales & Operations Director, Audatex UK.** “We are now extending the value of this work by exploring how best to improve the processes that exist up-and-downstream from estimate creation.”

Customer feedback has provided the company with a ‘top ten’ of required developments to be made to the system and work is underway with the Technical Committee to develop value propositions around each item in order to ensure a strong return on investment for customers. These include the ability to ‘freeze’ parts prices when re-calculating, enhanced authorisation status management to improve MI and more.

Exciting new opportunity for bodyshops

As a brand new and complementary addition to Audatex’ portfolio of solutions for bodyshops, the company has launched an innovative diagnostics solution designed specifically for the accident repair industry. Delivered in support of the drive to increase efficiency, improve cycle times and reduce costs, Vehicle Health Check is a comprehensive, ‘out of the box’ solution which enables bodyshops to carry out quick and cost-effective vehicle diagnostic scans, helping to reduce costs and open the door to ‘up-sell’ opportunities - an increasingly attractive prospect.

In line with changing standards and industry best practice, and in support of quality control processes, Vehicle Health Check allows both pre-scanning of damaged vehicles to highlight fault codes on arrival into the bodyshop; and post-scans before the vehicle’s return to the customer. The unit’s print

functionality ensures that both pre- and post-scan reports can be provided to efficiently re-coup charges from customers and, where necessary, act as supporting evidence should the appearance of fault codes be called into question.

Paul Sykes said: “We are pleased to offer Vehicle Health Check with no upfront costs, regular free software updates and full warranty and support via the Audatex Service Desk. The £249.99 monthly license fee covers unlimited diagnostic re-sets; removing the time and cost associated with outsourcing and providing additional retail sales opportunities.”

BodyNet Limited has now officially released its new online claims notification tool “ClaimsPlus”

ClaimsPlus is an FNOL solution developed to target the smaller fleet and accident management companies.

The FNOL is recorded within ClaimsPlus and then assigned to the repair network using Post code allocation. The bodyshop, in addition to viewing the claim within the BodyNet system is also notified via E mail and fax.

One of the key features of the system is that the claims handler can view the compiled estimate along with images online, without the need for any 3rd party software.



Peter Kenny, Managing Director of BodyNet states, “ClaimsPlus was developed to meet the increase in demand for smaller accident

management and fleet companies to be able to manage and distribute their claims in a cost effective way. Having ClaimsPlus as part of our estimating and claims tracking solutions enables them to be able to provide a complete end to end solution without committing to an upfront investment.”

Innovation and Insight

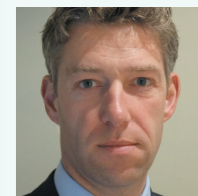
Leading technology provider Inter-est now has over 1,000 users that have successfully migrated to its innovative cloud computing solution Insight. Insight is a complete workflow management system that can be accessed at any time from a web enabled device, including a mobile phone. Insight allows repairers to view and manage the status and administrative detail about their

work online and in real time. They are not limited to main servers, licensed desktops or office hours.

Insight aids visibility, centralises information and eases communication. Insurers, fleet managers and customers, with permission, can see what repairers want them to view whether that is through a web interface or through Insight generating a pdf document which then gets emailed to the customer.

Within Insight is Vision, the TTS methods-based, online estimating solution which is now the second most widely used system in the UK. Vision links seamlessly with Thatcham escribe methods and ensures that the assessment matches the method statement that is put into the workshop. Using Thatcham data throughout the assessment process ensures Vision avoids the issues that systems using manufacturers’ data can experience whereby the assessment and the method are inconsistent.

Inter-est has also developed menu-price driven assessment software for fast track networks such as Global, Eco Express and Lex’s Swift Repair. It has been designed so that if the system detects the repair is outside the scope of a rapid concept, it warns the user and automatically substitutes the menu price data with a Thatcham assessment.



“The industry is moving towards repair over replace models and a fast-track turnaround,” said Michael Nixon, Managing Director, Inter-est.. “We’ve

been able to develop flexible and innovative solutions that support those requirements for a number of customers. We’ve been able to do it in a way that supports their existing processes rather than as a secondary external task.

“Most of our clients notify through Insight, so the shell assessment is already pre-populated with all the administrative detail,” he added. “The VDA can then create the assessment, maybe using menu pricing data, and the system will warn them if it sees that the assessment they are trying to create sits outside of that model. We have solutions that will manage audit, automated authority and Vision can even order parts electronically on the users behalf. Finally the VDA can present a methods-pack to the workshop and move on to his next job knowing Insight will

keep everybody else in the process informed with progress updates.”

Inter-est’s Expert solutions have been delivering huge benefits to their clients for years now. Expert Audit and Expert Authority guide the VDA through the assessment process and ensure that all commercial terms and best practice principles are adhered to. The Expert Authority solution can then inspect the assessment on behalf of the principal and automatically authorise repairs to proceed.

“Our open solutions are not specifically developed for the insurer market, but are designed to add value to the industry for all parties. We’ve always had a very open and customer focused approach to software development and we are committed to delivering solutions and services that offer significant time and cost savings for all stakeholders.”

Key2Key Ltd have designed and developed their software solution to be aligned with the Concorde IT Group’s automotive estimating offering ‘AutoClaims’, historically AutoClaims is a robust, economically viable system, currently underused in the market place.

Jason Newell Automotive Division General Manager at Concorde IT Group commented;

“Concorde IT Group are pleased to announce our partnership with Key2Key Ltd in providing a true end to end solution for the repairers and work providers within the industry. By integrating a tried and tested estimating product in AutoClaims and by providing both a quality process and recycled parts option, Key2Key are leading the way in driving the industry forward. AutoClaims is able to offer a truly competitive alternative estimating system in the market place.”

An ‘estimate’ is just that, an ‘estimate’, trends work provider driven have for too long dictated that an estimate should actually be the invoice before the repair has even commenced. The cost to the repairer to achieve what realistically is unnecessary is astronomical, intangible and provided by the repairer at no charge. The opportunity has been exploited to micro manage the repair process and cost at the estimating stage, clearly detracting from the repair process, causing delays in the cycle times.

The AutoClaims system utilises Thatchams ‘Thatcham Time Schedule’ and ‘Thatcham Parts Schedule’ data, a

common parts database has been developed jointly by Concorde and Key2Key to build our recycled-eco-parts search engine which is interrogated at the point of estimate to identify available recycled-parts automatically.

The value of recycled parts is evident, by utilising a supply source that is regulated, and delivered correctly, a reduction in total loss vehicles is achievable, a reduction in landfill content is envisaged, and we are promoting an environmentally friendly, economically viable alternative.



David Case MD of Key2Key Ltd stated;

“We have examined the estimating systems currently used in the market place, AutoClaims

and the environmental ethos of their parent company aligns with our model and our vision going forward and positioning them as one of our key partners is a core factor to our success. It could be perceived that for reasons not transparent that the market currently has been driven to an almost price prohibitive state, we have seen the extensive problems caused during the outage of existing systems, this cannot happen with AutoClaims, AutoClaims provides an economically viable option to the repairer. The portal to our recycled-parts is direct through this estimating system. To reinforce our ethical position a retail parts portal will be available for those repairers and work providers who choose to use an alternative estimating system”.

One of the key drivers behind our venture is to promote a sustainable model, the continual closure of repairers suggests that the market may enter a situation of under-capacity; we are endeavouring to ensure that does not happen. When we examine that many repairers are running at minimal profitability per repair every reduction in cost through the repair process is one step closer to stability in an extremely fragile industry.

Key2Key Ltd has carefully selected key partners within the claims/repair process that support our ethical and transparent ethos, the Concorde IT Group with its AutoClaims offering brings significant credibility to our venture. Concorde bring a number of offerings to the repairer, ranging from data recovery systems, cost reducing Eco-friendly PC’s, internet connectivity and security to full blown bodyshop management systems.