



## CASE STUDY

# Reduce Setup Time with Optical Positioning and Target Placement

**J**eff Cotten, owner of Masters Auto Body in Charlottesville, Virginia, has been in the industry for 30 years. Through his comprehensive expertise and consummate professionalism, Cotten has established and upheld an exceptional standard within the automotive collision and repair sector, successfully establishing multiple locations. He shares his insights on integrating in-house ADAS calibrations into Masters Auto Body.

“Ensuring proper ADAS calibration is essential,” Cotten emphasizes. “It is beyond me how some collision professionals are not performing ADAS calibrations and opting to avoid it altogether.”

Cotten understands the enormous responsibility of vehicle repair professionals to guarantee that all vehicles are safely aligned on the road after repairs, especially

as technology continues to advance. His approach to vehicle repair and service, combined with strong business acumen, demonstrates how his businesses are adaptable and prioritize evolving with technology while always keeping the customer’s safety at the forefront.

### **Getting Started – Planning, Documentation, and Guided Functions**

It is crucial to completely understand ADAS as you consider your investment in a calibration solution. There are multiple options, offerings, and designs for calibration equipment. As a service provider and repair center, you are responsible for properly servicing each vehicle and meeting the manufacturer’s requirements and conditions.

Some of these standard systems widely spread in our industry are lane departure warning (LDW), lane

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keep assist or lane centering (LKA, LKS or LCA), blind spot detection (BSD), automated emergency braking (AEB), vehicle distancing or adaptive cruise control (ACC), front and rear cross-traffic systems (FCS and RCS), around view monitoring (AVM), and night view monitoring systems (NVM). Each system has specific requirements and varies from vehicle makes and models. Understanding the spatial requirements for each calibration is crucial during the planning, procurement, and scheduling phases.

“We would not be doing this work in-house if we did not have the proper equipment,” Cotten says. “The IA900AST contains the necessary tools for a comprehensive, turn-key operation. Utilizing the tablet for pre- and post-scans, in combination with the calibration frame and targets, enables efficient completion of the job while minimizing the time the customer’s vehicle spends off-site and reducing the risk of accidents throughout the calibration process.”

Additionally, the ability to perform alignment verifications and four-wheel alignments serves as an added benefit and revenue source, supporting expedited vehicle inspections prior to the calibration process and ensuring a prompt return of the vehicle to the customer, all while maintaining stringent quality standards.

The optical positioning system efficiently facilitates target placement, streamlining the calibration process. Autel’s ADAS software provides comprehensive guidance with intuitive step-by-step instructions, visuals, and videos, significantly enhancing work efficiency and reducing costs. This eliminates the need to sift through various information sources and minimizes unnecessary paper waste.

According to Cotten, technicians — even those without prior experience — can complete calibrations in an average time of 15 to 20 minutes. adasTHINK effectively guides technicians in determining the specific

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calibrations required for each vehicle, preventing guesswork, missed opportunities, or improper repairs.

“We have yet to call Autel’s technical support, and the times my technicians contacted a remote expert, they were given the solution without the need to access our tool remotely,” Cotten says.

### **Bringing ADAS into the Business Site**

Accommodating ADAS equipment is a significant undertaking that necessitates ample space to effectively house all components, including the calibration frame and associated accessories, such as targets, reflectors, and floor mats. Compliance with spatial requirements is essential for servicing various systems as a collision and ADAS calibration center. In addition to well-known front camera systems for lane departure, front radar for automatic braking and distancing, and blind spot detection, collision repair centers must also be prepared to manage AVM systems.

“Acknowledging that not everyone has the privilege of possessing unused space, we were already in possession of a 24-foot-by-24-foot structure, which currently accommodates our IAW900AST and serves as our designated calibration area,” Cotten says. This enables his technicians to conduct all calibrations and alignment checks using their IA900AST without any spatial constraints or limitations on vehicle coverage.

Through the Autel website, Cotten connected with an authorized distributor servicing his area, Gary Machiros of Applied Automotive Technology. When Cotten decided to integrate ADAS into his business, Machiros played a pivotal role in providing essential information and support.

Offering valuable guidance, Machiros assisted in determining the suitable equipment for Cotten’s shop, ensuring it aligned with the business’s vision and objectives. Leveraging his ownership of an



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automotive repair center, Machiros demonstrated a deep understanding of the business model and the challenges involved, further enriching the support provided and reflecting exceptionally on Autel's customer service.

### **Training and Success**

Under the guidance of a mentor, Cotten quickly realized that successfully implementing ADAS as a new offering in his business required more than just acquiring equipment and a building. While awaiting the processing of his Autel IA900AST delivery, Cotten organized a comprehensive three-day, on-site training to ensure his technicians were well-prepared for this new challenge.

Cotten emphasized the importance of hands-on experience, stating, "While training is crucial, nothing can substitute hands-on experience. Additionally, having access to real-time answers from experienced professionals like Machiros and his technicians, just a phone call away, adds significant value."

Cotten closes with, "We have transitioned from outsourcing all our ADAS calibrations to conducting them in-house. This shift has significantly impacted safety, quality, efficiency, and profitability. Generating positive cash flow from the outset, the revenue generated by the Autel equipment exceeds its original purchase cost. We are fully satisfied with our decision to acquire the equipment, and the overall experience has been exceptional."

For more information, visit Autel's comprehensive website [here](#).

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