

Professional Distributor

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TOOL SALES COAST — TO — COAST

Page 6

Two independent distributors weigh in on their business approaches and customer care, from the shores of Maryland to the lumber yards of the Pacific Northwest.

Show Me Your Truck:

A lot of thought went into the custom design of this independent tool dealer's 2020 Freightliner M2. [Page 12](#)

Most Wanted: Most requested tools and equipment from PD's sister publication, *PTEN*. See products from Mueller-Kueps, Thexton, Mitchell 1, and more. [Page 14](#)

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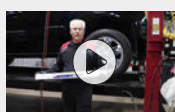
I notice in
the summer
months that
our technicians
really start

to slow down. Is it possible that the hot
conditions are affecting their performance?

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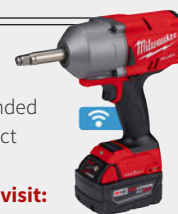
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News

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**BY SARA SCULLIN
EDITOR**

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Saying goodbye to summer

... and hello to the next season in tool sales.

As I type this, it is still August in the Midwest. Like most places in the country, we've had some staggeringly hot days these last couple months. Weather that can slow you down a little and make every sweaty step in the outdoors seem just a bit more grueling than usual. These are what they call the "dog days of summer."

Side note: I've always wondered what this phrase actually means, so I consulted The Old Farmer's Almanac where I learned it's got nothing at all to do with a shaggy dog panting into its water bowl on a front porch, but instead refers to a curiously named star in the sky. But I digress.

Hopefully, the summer months treated you kindly. Hopefully, the truck's A/C kept humming along and laboring customers weren't too short-tempered. Depending on where you live, the temperatures outside can impact everything from morale to speed, and even sales.

I'll never forget riding with independent distributor Geoff Beveridge in Dallas in August of last year (September 2018 *PD* cover story). It had been a productive morning for sales; Beveridge was running a GEARWRENCH deal that day and customers were on and off the truck. There was one A/C unit in the back that had just come in; it was barely in the door when a technician purchased it on the spot for his shop where the A/C unit had gone kaput. That was a mighty quick sale for Beveridge – and a godsend for the technicians in the repair bays.

It made me wonder: how many

mobile tool dealers make – and even count on – seasonal/relief sales? You've got your shop cooling products, vehicle A/C repair tools and equipment, even bottles of water near checkout.

If wildly swinging temperatures are the norm in your neck of the woods, it means we are officially soft-shoeing out of summer and heading into the next season of sales. Where summer meant evaporative coolers and fans, fall and winter bring updated gear like heated hoodies, not to mention the winter-season vehicle repair tools to cover the bases for heater systems, windshield washer and wiper maintenance, and oil cooler lines.

Nutritionists will tell you it's healthy to "eat with the seasons." I suspect the same can be said for sales. Not only does this natural turn of events keep you and your customers on your toes, but to some extent, it ensures products are rotated and changed out along the shelves of your mobile store. And we all know a little change can be a good thing.

If seasonal sales that support both shop environment and labor inside the shop are a dependable part of your mobile tool business, there's no need to shed a tear when the leaves turn or even when that white stuff falls from the sky.

Does this type of sale have a significant impact on the bottom line where you live? If so, let us know what products you find move with the temperatures. Or, if you've heard a different explanation behind the phrase "dog days of summer," I'd like to hear what that is because I'm still not sold on the star bit. **PD**

Can't miss products:

If you missed our previously published list of Innovation Awards nominees, you can find them here: VehicleServicePros.com/2019/IANominees.

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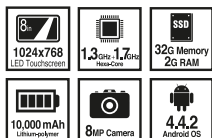
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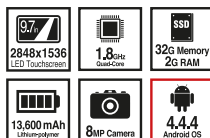
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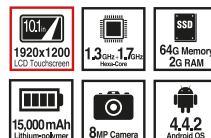
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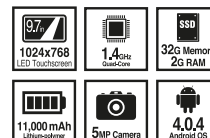
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To see more photos of Pessagno
and Douglas' trucks, visit:

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East Coast tool dealer Marty Pessagno gave up his flag to become an independent, and owner of TNT Tools. He serves Prince George's County, Maryland.

Tool sales COAST TO COAST

Two independent distributors weigh in on their business approach and customer care, from the shores of Maryland to the lumber yards of the Pacific Northwest.

by Sara Scullin, Editor

Mobile tool sales businesses are as different and diverse as the people and landscapes that make up this country. Local industry can have a significant impact on who your customers are and what kinds of tools they need for day-to-day business.

The following independent mobile tool dealers each have owned and operated their businesses – on opposite ends of the country – for more than a decade. While their customer profiles couldn't be more different, both business owners share plenty of similarities. For example, both adhere to sound strategies for providing optimal customer service and take some of the more universal tool industry challenges (such as the occasional heavy traffic and online shoppers) in their stride.

The landscape may change (drastically) in the 3,000-odd miles it takes to traverse one side of the country to the other, but successful tool businesses are built on a firm foundation consisting of a lot of the same elements, no matter where you live.

EAST COAST HUSTLE

Marty Pessagno

TNT Tools

Prince George's County, Md.

Independent tool dealer and owner of TNT Tools, Marty Pessagno grew up on the East Coast in Maryland and has

been in the mobile tool business for 12 years, serving Prince George's County working with the GEARWRENCH Street Team.

He was with a flag for ten of those years and now has switched over to calling the shots as an independent for about a year and a half. For Pessagno, selling tools runs in the family.

"My brother was a tool distributor at one time; we hung out all the time and we still do," he says. "I thought it would be neat to do something on my own. He got out, and I stayed with it and stuck it out. I love [this business]. I think it's great. There's a lot of freedom, but there's a lot of responsibility. I can jump in a truck, put a name on the side, and go out and do this, but there's a little bit more to it. We've actually got to go out and have conversations with people and get to know them on a personal basis, instead of just going in there and asking, 'Hey, what do you need?' I like to get to know these guys so we're both on the same playing field. Talking, communication, texting, and calling ... it all pays off in the long-run."



Marty Pessagno

TNT Tools

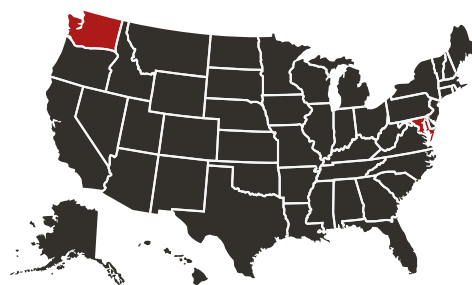
Prince George's
County, Maryland



Abe Douglas

Abe's Toolbox

Olympia,
Washington



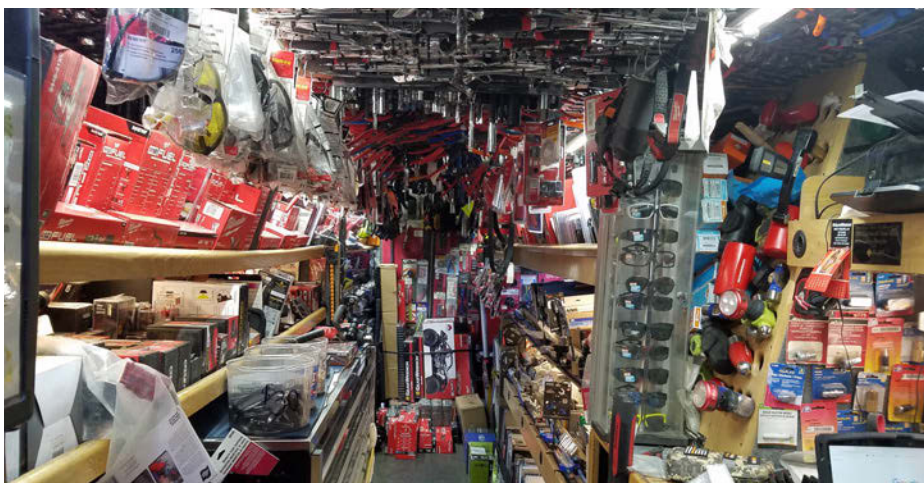
COVER STORY

Pessagno says the unique thing about this region is that it's largely driven by the U.S. government, which has a large presence in Prince George's County. This applies to his business, too. Pessagno makes runs to Andrews Airforce base, sometimes taking part in both public and private sectors and even navigating the occasional shutdown.

"A lot of people live on base and do business off-base, which helps out," he says. "If there's a shutdown, everyone kind of holds their money in this area."

The East Coast distributor enjoys his customer base.

"I have some real neat shops ... [including] some guys who are independent and will work on one high-end, specific makes, like BMW or Mercedes," he says. "They do really well in this area. Then you've got your dealerships in this area which I deal with, which are all top-of-the-line and state-of-the-art, with built-in toolboxes in the wall and ... shared computers. It's unbelievable how some of these shops are set up now. Everything comes out of the ceiling for water and



oil; lifts come straight up from out of the ground. Technicians will go into a special room to pick up high-end tools and check them out."

In addition to dealerships and small shops, Pessagno visits body shops, too, many of which have been [purchased] by the Maryland-based company Caliper. He also stops at small independent shops and even specialty shops that handle stereo systems, window tinting, and car wraps.

Making the sale

Pessagno has been in sales for a long time. He knows how to position his product and himself for optimal results.

"What I do now as an independent is educate these technicians; that's the biggest thing ... and these days everyone is looking to save a dollar," he says.

Finally, Pessagno is a self-proclaimed "clean freak" and says it has made a difference in his business.

"The first thing my customers see is either me or my truck," he says. "The next thing they see is the inside of my truck. There's a place and order for everything. When customers see the truck, I hear, 'It's unbelievable, your truck's so clean.'"

Living and working on the East Coast is not without its challenges. The gridlock of traffic can set Pessagno back in his schedule. He says he can count

Pessagno is a self-proclaimed "clean freak" and says it has made a difference in his business.

on this happening a couple of times per month.

"The majority of time there are no back roads, and you're stuck where you're at," he says. "I'll text the guys and [let them] know what's going on, even if I'm not selling. Communication is key to success in this industry."

Despite this, Pessagno runs a tight ship, or truck, and is looking at putting a second truck on his route down the road. Customers know they can depend on him to provide tools, education, and service at a fair price.

NAVIGATING THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

Abe Douglas
Abe's Toolbox
Olympia, Wash.

Abe Douglas, owner of Abe's Toolbox, is based in Rochester, Washington, about 70 miles from the Pacific Ocean. He was with a flag for ten years before going independent and has been in the tool selling business a total of 12 years. Douglas has lived in the state of Washington since 1990, moving there as a technician employed in the military. After that, he worked with law enforcement as a corrections officer for several years. Eventually, Douglas decided he wanted to try something new and go



When running a buy-one, get-one deal, TNT Tools owner Marty Pessagno makes sure to have a lot of visual signs on the truck. He also puts the candy in the back, so customers walk all the way through the truck.

"Guys love [buy-one-get-one deals] with the wrenches, socket sets, stuff that GEARWRENCH has to offer," he says. He always works with his customers to get a good deal. "If guys are saving money, I'm going to be happy doing what I'm doing."

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the self-employed route. These days, he drives his 2008 Freightliner MT55 in the Washington state capital, from Tumwater to south Centralia, Chehalis, and Napavine. He runs a route that's about 50 percent heavy duty and 50 percent automotive – with a bit of auto-body thrown into the mix.

Much of Douglas' route is in lumber territory, with a great many logging companies and sawmills dotting the landscape. He says workers in this industry use a lot of the same tools as his heavy duty customers.

Show them what they're missing

This veteran tool dealer isn't shaken by changes taking place in the aftermarket or online tool sales. His approach is simple: show customers the tools they could benefit from, and be consistent and effective enough that they'll buy from you time and time again.

"Online [sales] are not much of a factor," he says. "Customers buy for the service. If you provide a service, they're going to come buy from you. Buying online very seldom comes up, and I have enough customers and do enough business where if [some customers] want to buy online, they can do that, but [then] they know they can't come to me to get stuff warrantied and

taken care of unless they're a customer."

What are Douglas' secrets for better sales?

"No secrets, really," he says. "You just tote and promote stuff; bring new tools or different tools around and just show guys what's available. Most of the time you show them stuff and it's like they never knew a tool for that existed."

Douglas says he does a lot of tote and promote, which has worked well for him over the years. That's one strategy; the other is simply treating his customers right.

"They're buying from me, not the tool company," he says. "Treat [your customers] right and they just come back."

Apart from taking care of customers, Douglas says it's essential that new and seasoned tool dealers alike pay themselves first and put money aside for the future.

"Invest in your retirement," Douglas says. "I expect my customers to pay me at least \$40 per week. It should be easy for a dealer to put \$40 or more per week into some kind of retirement fund. [You should] Start investing while you are young, but it is never too late to start."

Tools and training

With a route deep in the heart of the lumber industry, Douglas keeps more heavy duty product on his truck than

West Coast tool dealer Abe Douglas also gave up his flag to become his own boss. The owner of Abe's Toolbox, Douglas' route is based in Rochester, Washington, about 70 miles from the Pacific Ocean.

most, like a good variety of larger-sized tools and "a ton of Milwaukee stuff." He may get into diagnostic products a bit, but most of his heavy duty stops use factory tools. While he keeps a heavy duty scan tool on the truck, Douglas says it's still a challenge to find products with the appropriate amount of coverage for his heavy-duty customers.

Because Douglas' customer base is so specific, he says it can be a challenge to work with suppliers to get product (and the right product) ordered and shipped in a timely fashion.

"I'm looking for specific items, and a lot of times, not your normal items," he says. "It can be difficult to get the oddball, oversized stuff. Probably the biggest problem is ordering pieces of things, like parts for tools."

Douglas says business is consistent, and he does "whatever it takes" to do the job and do it well, staying busy even if that means putting in 14 hours a day, five days a week. He looks forward to celebrating retirement in the next five years and seeing where the next adventure takes him. **PD**

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To find the perfect tool truck



Knowing where every scratch, ding, and dent came from was a major factor in this tool dealer's decision to buy a new tool truck.

by Emily Markham, Assistant Editor

Matt Sledge has been an independent mobile tool dealer since 2010, but this September will mark his 19th year selling tools overall. His route is located in Rutherford County, Tennessee, and Sledge notes that he sells to about "90 percent automotive shops and 10 percent industrial."

Recently, Sledge bought a new Freightliner M2 22' truck from Summit Bodyworks. He purchased the truck in April but received it at ISN's Tool Dealer Expo in June. *(To get an exclusive look at Sledge's truck before he stocked it with tools, visit VehicleServicePros.com/21088713).*

Sledge's decision to buy a new truck came from him growing tired of all the problems his old truck had and seeing all those same problems in the used trucks he was looking at as replacements. After many nights scouring the internet for a truck that would fit his needs, Sledge had had enough.

"It just got to be too much," he says. "I drove to Gainesville, Florida, and looked at one, and then I drove to Atlanta and looked at another one. I sat on the computer every single night looking at trucks and options ... it was very frustrating trying to find [a] truck that actually suited an independent's needs.

"It's not like you're looking for a blue [Toyota] Camry and there's a bunch of them out there," Sledge continues. "It's a tool truck. There's not many of them out there. It almost forces you to buy a new truck if you want something nice, or you want it the way you want it."

On a whim, while on a ski trip in Colorado, Sledge decided to pay Summit Body Works a visit. Upon arrival at Summit's facility, Chris McHan, account manager at Summit Bodyworks, gave Sledge a personal tour of the facility and the truck building process.

"[It] meant a lot to me," Sledge says of the tour, "because I actually got to see how much work was put into these trucks, which justifies the amount of money it costs to build one."

While some tool dealers look at the price tag that comes with buying a new truck and can't fathom spending that much money, Sledge looked at it this way: He had the opportunity to start from "ground zero," so he knew every scratch,

every oil change, every blowout, everything done to the truck ... came from him. There were no surprises.

It also didn't hurt that McHan was accommodating with all the customizations Sledge requested. To really make the truck his own, Sledge had quite a few customizations added, such as custom cabinets, countertops built to a custom size, a window that allows you to look outside and see the other side of the truck, a 48" box on the outside, and 47" high drawers across the shelves. He also had a sound system with sub-woofers and a nice stereo, refrigerator, and microwave installed.

On top of these customizations, Summit went even further and added a small, custom metal strip down the shelf for tearing receipts, a custom-made card-display with Sledge's new logo for his business cards, and under-shelf lighting on every shelf, including the bottom ones.

Now that Sledge has his truck exactly how he wants it, he can focus on what he does best – selling tools. Cleanliness and professionalism are Sledge's two keys to success. When it comes to displaying the tools, Sledge says, "I display them how they should be displayed – open and available [for customers] to [see] what they can buy."

"I put a lot of emphasis on being as professional as can be because [customers are] dealing with other trucks that have programs that show them or mold them how to be professional," he says. "I just have to do this straight off my cuff."

With his new truck customized to perfection and not a tool out of place, Sledge is ready to hit the road and make some sales. **PD**



To view more photos of
Sledge's truck, visit:
[VehicleServicePros.com/](http://VehicleServicePros.com/21092502)
21092502

VEHICLESERVICEPROS.com



Top Left - Matt Sledge has been an independent mobile tool dealer since 2010, but this September will mark his 19th year selling tools overall. **Top Right** - Sledge likes to keep this truck extremely organized and keeps tools from the same categories stored together. **Bottom Right** - Sledge likes to keep his workspace clean and free of clutter because that is the area customers hang out in the most. **Above** - In Sledge's opinion, the cleanliness of a dealer's truck is one of the most important factors when selling tools.

Show us your truck

Recently upgraded your truck? Have a product display or demonstration area for customers? Share it with us!

Contact Editor Sara Scullin by email at Sara@VehicleServicePros.com for more information.

MOST WANTED

A Quick-Lock Razor Scraper

The **Mueller-Kueps Quick-Lock Razor Scraper** is designed to reduce the time it takes to remove and replace the blade. Instead of having to twist out the screw, users can quickly slide back the knob to release the blade, then slide the knob back up to secure the blade again. A two-component handle with rubber coating provides a secure grip. The scraper comes with five steel and five plastic blades. The plastic blades can be used on paint, while the steel blades can be used to remove adhesives and more from a variety of surfaces such as steel and glass.

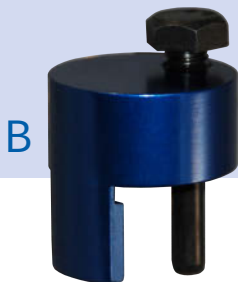
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B Stretch Belt Installation Tool

The **Cal-Van Tools Stretch Belt Installation Tool**, No. 736, is designed to make installing new stretch belts easier and faster. The design helps increase the ease of installation and prevent damage to the belt and pulley. The lightweight and compact design makes this tool suitable for working in tight areas.

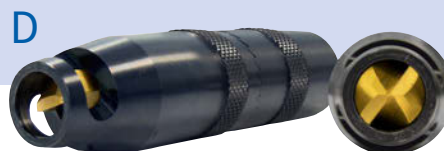
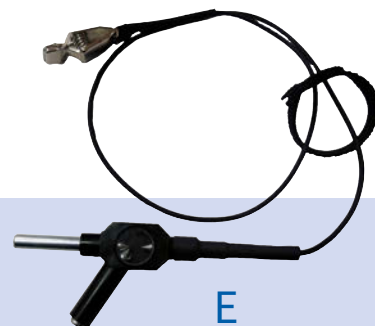
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C 3-in-1 Magnetic Sweeper

Master Magnetics' 3-in-1 Magnetic Sweeper with Quick-Release is designed to tow, mount, or hang and works over any terrain. The magnetic sweeper provides a fast cleanup, reduces the risk of injury and property damage, and reclaims the use of metal components that it retrieves. It is available in five widths ranging from 48" to 96".

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D Huck Rivet Shaver

The **Arconic Huck Rivet Shaver** fits any standard size drill and burnishes 5/32", 3/16", and 1/4" shavable rivet heads to leave a clean, solid appearance that closely matches solid or brazier head rivets. Shavable head rivets can be installed in a blind hole where the blind side or back side does not allow access.

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E Small Engine Spark Tester

The **Thexton Extended Small Engine Spark Tester**, No. 862, is designed for small engines and has a long lead. The third "grounding pin" allows the spark to jump the gap in non-battery applications, the company says. The black backdrop lens allows for more visibility of spark. This tester works on most two and four stroke small engines. The product has an extra-long ground wire to provide the option for more grounding locations. Hook and loop tape is included for allowing the tool to be strapped facing the user.

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Do YOU stock it?

The following products are among the most requested tools and equipment from recent issues of *PD's* sister publication, *PTEN*. Perhaps you've already received requests about some of these items. Take a closer look at stocking them.

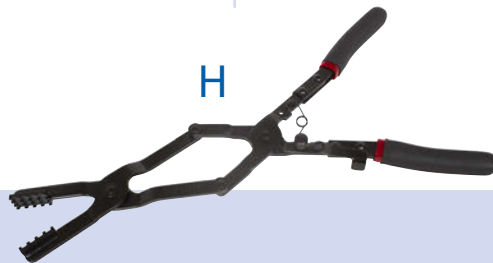
F Stubby Impact Wrenches

The **Milwaukee M12 FUEL Stubby Impact Wrenches** are designed to allow improved access in tight spaces, while delivering the power to complete demanding tasks. These wrenches deliver up to 250 ft.-lbs of breakaway torque to remove stubborn bolts and fasteners. A four-mode drive control feature gives users the versatility to switch between modes to match the power and speed needed for the application at hand. These impact wrenches offer an auto shut-off mode to prevent over-fastening of bolts. The M12 FUEL Stubby Impact Wrenches are available in 1/4", 3/8", and 1/2" sizes.

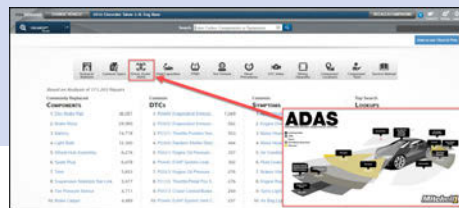
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F



H



G



I



J

G ADAS Quick Link Feature

The **Mitchell 1 ProDemand Driver Assist ADAS Quick Link Feature** is designed to allow technicians to see and access all of the advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) features and components on a vehicle via the Driver Assist ADAS Quick Link. This repair information makes it quick and easy to diagnose, repair, and calibrate ADAS. Users can select a vehicle, click the Driver Assist ADAS Quick Link button, and get access to a table that consolidates all of the ADAS information for the vehicle in a single location. ProDemand delivers all of the ADAS features and components, so technicians are able to select the repair and calibration information that they want without needing to perform multiple lookups to find the information separately. ProDemand also identifies the components of an ADAS feature that will require calibration, as well as special tools or scan tools needed to complete the job.

Enter #25 at "e-inquiry" on VehicleServicePros.com

I LED Lighting System

The **Stertil-Koni High Performance LED Lighting System** for the Skylift four-post lifting system is designed to increase area-specific under vehicle lighting to improve shop safety and efficiency. This lighting system features: pre-assembled 40" light tubes with transformer and mounting brackets; modular "plug and play system"; slim-line design; IP65 water resistance; and eco-friendly, energy-efficient bulbs.

Enter #27 at "e-inquiry" on VehicleServicePros.com

J Tiger Grip Gloves

The **Eppco Tiger Grip Gloves** feature a raised, full textured surface designed to improve gripping power. These gloves are commercial grade, 8mil thick, puncture resistant, and latex free. They are available in orange to provide high visibility, and to allow users to see dirt, grime, and grease, helping to prevent transferring it to vehicle interiors and other unwanted places. These gloves are available in sizes small through XXXL.

Enter #28 at "e-inquiry" on VehicleServicePros.com

SNEAK PEEK

Welcome to Sneak Peek!

This section features recently introduced automotive tools and equipment. See new products even before automotive technicians read about them in *PTEN* magazine.

MULTI-TOOL WITH A LOW-PROFILE FRAME

The **CRKT Twist and Fix Screwdriver Tool**, No. 9902, is a stainless steel multi-tool used for everyday repair jobs. The tool is held together with a low-profile frame, and each element snaps in and out with ease. Instead of being housed in fixed, eternal bearings, each element in the toolset revolves around a central axle, lengthening the tool you need and keeping the others out of the way. The screwdriver tool includes flat drivers in the sizes 1/16", 3/32", and 7/64", and Phillip drivers in the sizes PH00, PH0, and PH1. Additionally, the tool features a durable, glass reinforced nylon handle.

Enter #29 at "e-inquiry" on VehicleServicePros.com



FEATURES A MAGNETIC BASE

The **Cliplight Spotlight Mini**, No. 111111, features a magnetic base and adjustable joint for different angles. The 5W COB light emits 600 lm for one and a half hours and 300 lm for three hours. It is IP65 water-resistant and includes a micro USB charger cable.

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COMPACT FOR USE IN TIGHT SPACES

The **Chicago Pneumatic 1/2"**

Impact Wrench, No. CP7748, is designed for power, comfort, and durability, and is suitable for workshop or roadside assistance tasks such as tire changing. The impact wrench weighs 4.4 lbs and delivers 960 ft-lbs of power in forward and reverse. The power ring system allows users to use this impact in tight spaces without having to remove the tool to change direction. The tool features a 360 degree swivel air inlet to improve maneuverability. The curved handle uses rubber material at the back of the tool to improve handling and prevent the tool from slipping through dirty and oily fingers.

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REMOVE INJECTORS WITHOUT REMOVING THE ELECTRICAL COMPONENTS

The **CTA Manufacturing Corp. Injector**

Puller Kit, No. 7808, removes frozen or stuck injectors without removing the electrical components. Use the injector puller to service many older and newer model vehicles with Denso, Siemens, Bosch, and Delphi common rail or piezoelectric injectors from 1999 and beyond. The kit includes two connectors (M12 and M14) if the original coupling cannot be removed. Remove the injector by either rotating with the handle or rotating with axial extraction. The kit includes a slide hammer shaft, a 3.3-lb (1.5-kg) slide hammer, an articulator with a foam handle, an M12 connector, an M14 connector, two spacers, and a threaded extractor.

Enter #33 at "e-inquiry" on VehicleServicePros.com

DESIGNED TO DETECT A 5 PERCENT HYDROGEN/95 PERCENT NITROGEN TRACER GAS MIXTURE

The **Robinair LD9-TG Tracer Gas Leak Detector** is designed to locate the source of a system leak using UV wavelength technology along with tracer gas instead of common liquid refrigerant. The tool can detect an A/C system leak as small as 0.5 oz. per year for R-134a refrigerant and .015 oz. per year for R-1234yf refrigerant. Once a leak is detected, the leak size indicator bar graph will display on the full color detector screen. The tool is compatible with most hydrogen-based tracer gases and can be used in both light and heavy duty applications.

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DESIGNED WITH SIMPLE PLUG AND PLAY FEATURES

The **Matco Tools MaximusFlash+** is an easy-to-use remote diagnostics tool enabling flashing and reprogramming in the shop. The MaximusFlash+ is designed with simple plug and play features. Simply connect the device to the vehicle, connect the battery support and internet, and submit a diagnostic service request online. Within 30 minutes, a Matco factory-certified diagnostic technician will call the shop and complete the flashing service. For diagnostics needs, technicians can also request a diagnostic scan service and have a Matco diagnostic expert talk them through the OE scan tool results.

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X-431 THROTTLE

The **X-431 Throttle** is a full comprehensive diagnostic tool, which includes a charging base. It is based on the Android™ 7.1 System, which supports dual band WiFi (2.4 Ghz & 5Ghz) Communication. It has wide Coverage on most models, strong diagnostic capabilities, accurate detection data, IP 65 Rated.



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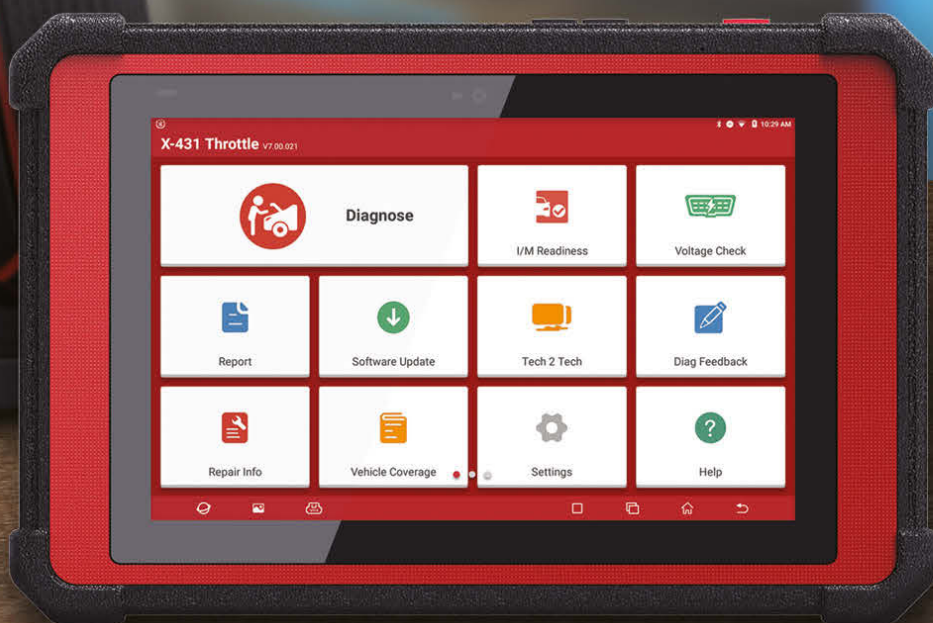
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SNEAK PEEK

PATENTED 2-PC DESIGN FOR EASY CLEANING

The **Titan Professional Tools Refillable Aluminum Spray Bottle**, No. 19426, is an eco-friendly, CFC-free, reusable spot sprayer. It can be filled with compressed air via the valve stem located at the bottom of the bottle. The spray bottle features a safety pressure relief valve, a viton sealing ring, and includes a 55mm jet nozzle and spray nozzle. The max volume is 227ml and the max operating pressure is 116 psi.

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DESIGNED FOR WHEEL LUGS ON TRUCKS AND BUSES

The **Central Tools Preset HD Tire Torque Wrench 475 ft-lb**, No. 96475, is designed for wheel lugs on many trucks and buses. The torque wrench has both 3/4" and 1" square drives to accommodate various sockets. It also reverses by flipping the tool over and inserting the square drive into the other side of the head. This eliminates extra components in the ratchet head and provides for the same accuracy in both right- and left-handed directions. A textured vinyl grip provides positive handling. The torque wrench is made in the U.S.A.

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READS THOUSANDS OF INFRARED TEMPERATURE SPOTS OVER A SURFACE AREA

The **Launch Tech USA Thermal Imager** reads thousands of infrared temperature spots over a surface area and combines those colored heat signals with an image of the object to make a thermal image. The Thermal Imager shows high temperature, low temperature, central temperature, and a heat color code. It measures temperatures from -4 to 842 degrees F with a +/- 2 percent accuracy. The unit can store up to 20,000 pictures and offers an auto shut down.

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SYSTEM WIDE**

SNEAK PEEK



EASY-TO-READ LASER ETCHED DUAL SCALE

The **Martin Sprocket & Gear Click-Type Micrometer Adjustable Torque Wrenches** are designed to offer an accuracy of +/- 3 percent CW and +/- 5 percent CCW. The torque wrenches feature an aluminum knurled handle and an easy-to-read laser etched dual scale (ft-lb and Nm). Available sizes include 1/2" drive (30-250 ft-lbs), 3/4" drive (100-600 ft-lbs), and 1" drive (200-1000 ft-lbs).

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FEATURES A SPRING-LOADED FRICTION BALL RETAINER

The **Grey Pneumatic 3/4" Drive Impact Extension Set**, No. 3304E, contains four extensions in 3", 7", 10", and 13" lengths. These extensions feature a spring-loaded friction ball retainer for positive socket retention. Extensions come packaged in a compact blow molded case for easy transport to job sites or for tool organization within a toolbox.

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CONVERTS SHOP AIR INTO NITROGEN

The **Dent Fix EZ Nitro Plastic Repair Station - Extended**, No. DF-EZN1G/DXE, converts shop air into nitrogen to eliminate the need to refill nitrogen bottles by utilizing the company's Nitrogen Plastic

Welder with a Dual Chamber Nitrogen Generator. The proprietary Flow Adjust Switch Technology (FAST) system simplifies nitrogen welding and eliminates flow adjustments by the user, reducing setup time and project completion. The kit includes a thermoplastic hot stapler kit, complete with seven varieties of staples, three mini die grinders with three different bits, hand seamer, heat gun, ring hammer, multi-clip pliers, shaping tools, trim removal tools, and plastic welding rods (ABS, polypropylene, polycarbonate, polyethylene, and polyurethane). It also has a high pressure N2 outlet to allow the user to attach air-powered tools to the side of the unit to run on nitrogen.



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ALLOWS BI-DIRECTIONAL ACCESS TO GRIP UNDER THE CLIPS

The **Steck Manufacturing Extended Clip Release Tool**, No. 21710, is designed to access door panel clips that are not easily accessible, saving technicians time and the possibility of breaking the clip. The tool is 18" long which allows bidirectional access to grip under the clips that sit deep in the door panel. The tool is laser cut from 1/8" hot rolled steel and has a beveled end. Using the beveled end with the large 6" handle allows technicians to twist and raise the interior door panel clips. It is made in the U.S.A.

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USES SHOCK ABSORPTION FOR INCREASED DURABILITY

The **Vessel Tool Impact Ball Screwdriver Bit** is a high durability bit designed to be used with power tools and provide longer durability. The bit can be used two ways, directly in the tool or in a bit holder of a power tool. These bits may also be used with hand tools. The Impact Ball Screwdriver Bit uses a VoHA alloy in its steel, as well as shock absorption at the ball torsion part of the bit for increased durability.

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REMOVE PLASTIC OIL PAN DRAIN PLUGS

The **Cal-Van Tools 4-pc Oil Pan Plug Remover**, No. 38200, contains tools and adapters to remove plastic oil pan drain plugs found on many late model Ford, Volkswagen, Audi, and BMW vehicles. The tool is also applicable to the Ford/Lincoln plastic oil pan drain plugs of these engines: 2.7L, 2.7L (2018), 3.0L, 3.3L, 3.5L Turbo, and 5.0L (2018). The adapters will not damage drain plugs and are designed to slot in and easily release these plugs. The set comes in a hard case for easy storage.

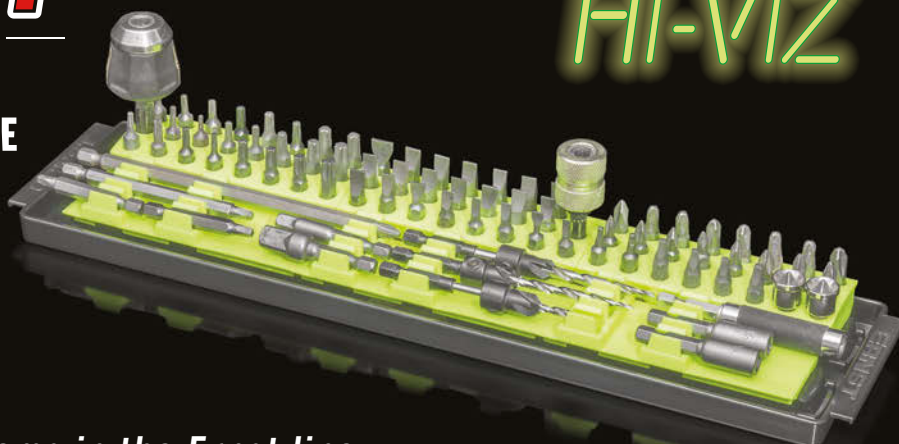
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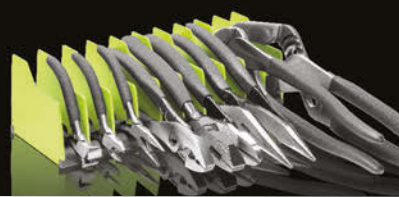
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**BY TYLER FUSSNER,
ASSISTANT EDITOR**

920-234-6232

Tyler@VehicleServicePros.com

Stay relevant with TPMS

Industry trends, new technologies, and developed capabilities with TPMS tooling are changing the category's landscape.

A complete tire pressure monitoring system (TPMS) service includes the ability to diagnose, test, repair, and reprogram vehicles' TPMS components. Automotive shops providing TPMS services need tools to help accommodate different vehicle makes and models, most of which require unique procedures, software, or equipment for servicing. When technicians understand the benefits of TPMS service and are aware of emerging technology and trends within the category, they don't have to fear turning business away. Instead, they can remain relevant – and profitable – with this service.

THE DEMAND FOR TPMS SERVICING

Since the federal mandates requiring TPMS on vehicles manufactured after September 2007 went into effect, the category has continuously expanded and evolved.

Scot Holloway, CEO and general manager at Bartec USA, says that servicing sensors is one of the few ways a tire retailer can actually grow their bottom line, as “there are more opportunities for service if a tire retailer has a complete TPMS service program in place.” When sensors are serviced, technicians may need to remove the wheels, clean the wheels and also replace seals, stems, cores, caps, or the entire sensor units themselves. All of this presents an opportunity to upsell and improve both the bottom line and service.

The lynchpin of TPMS servicing is the diagnostic tool, used to scan, diagnose, and reprogram the sensors, as well as write sensor IDs to the vehicle's ECU. There are many variations available today in terms of capabilities and features. Selecting the right tool for the needs of the shop and technicians is crucial.

The latest additions to TPMS tooling functionality include placard adjustment, OBD-II relearns for domestic vehicles, and Wi-Fi capabilities. Placard adjustment allows the tool to change the vehicle's ECU's tire pressure designation; when installing new tires that require a different PSI than the OE tires, the tool can tell the vehicle the new PSI levels so that the monitoring



The MaxiTPMS TS508 from Autel features Wi-Fi capabilities for software updates and data transfer. The TS508 can also perform placard adjustments and initiate relearn sequences through the OBD-II port.

system is accurate and in line with the new PSI profile. OBD-II relearns for domestic vehicles allow technicians to plug into the OBD-II port to initiate a relearn sequence rather than memorizing the hundreds of various procedures required for different years, makes, and models of domestic vehicles. Wi-Fi capabilities offer flexibility with updating and transferring data to and from the tool. Check out ‘Products to Stock’ on page 23 for tools that offer the latest features in the TPMS market.

SECURITY, ACCESS, AND COMPATIBILITY

An emerging trend in the automotive manufacturing industry is the implementation of security gateway modules. These modules were introduced to protect malfeasances from entering the OBD-II port and subsequent tampering with the vehicle's ECU or other components. Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) has included such a gateway module on select vehicles manufactured in 2018, and on even more models in their 2019 line. The security gateway module acts as a firewall, and many TPMS or scan tools that utilize OBD-II connections may be blocked from communicating with a vehicle that has such a module.

Upcoming topic:

Look for information on stocking and selling the following category:

Apparel (October)

"If you're not an OE dealer, a TPMS tool is not going to be able to communicate through their system," warns Sheila Stevens, aftermarket account executive at ATEQ TPMS Tools. "You'll be able to read the sensors, but as far as resetting the vehicle, it's not going to happen if you can't communicate through the OBD-II properly. In order to properly communicate through the OBD-II, you have to [have] either a dealer tool or get blessed by FCA if the tool is not a dealer tool."

The list of approved TPMS tool manufacturers is short, so it is crucial to check with the tool manufacturer regarding their ability to access FCA's security gateway module. The industry's sentiment is that other vehicle manufacturers will follow suit and implement their own security gateway modules on the OBD-II and other ports of entry.

"It's certainly drastic for the aftermarket," Bartec's Holloway says. "If anything, those [modules] are going to get more robust because there have been those able to 'hack' vehicles through the OBD-II."

STAYING UP TO DATE

Software updates for TPMS tools are integral, as they allow the tools to stay up to date on industry changes. Programmable sensors adding new makes and models, tools offering new features or extended vehicle coverage, and vehicle manufacturers implementing security modules and the subsequent granting or blocking of a tool's access to a vehicle's ECU will all affect a tool's ability to service select vehicles. However, these issues can be overcome through software updates. Some tool manufacturers charge subscription fees to end-users for software updates, while others offer free updates. Discuss with a shop owner their needs, such as how much TPMS services they provide and their need for up-to-date software. A tool with current software allows shops to service more vehicles and limit the instances in which they turn customers away.

A dealer may not be an expert in TPMS equipment, so it is important to

utilize information provided on the tools and elsewhere regarding available services and functions.

Many TPMS products come with support information built into the tool.

"Different vehicles are constantly changing how relearn is done, so technicians need access to that information," says Michael Flink, national trainer, professional tool level sales manager at Autel, speaking on the abilities of the TS508. "Simply having it in the tool helps; a step-by-step guide will guide the technicians through that process." Autel has a YouTube channel, support line, and live chat to provide resources for technicians and dealers alike.

Bartec also has relearn procedures built into their tool, as well as part number lookup features and the Tire Industry Association chart with page references. Their website features videos on updating the tool, activating sensors, and certain aspects of the tool's functions.

Likewise, ATEQ's Stevens says that ATEQ provides support through their own YouTube channel, a blog, bi-weekly emails, and training sessions to provide insight on troubleshooting tips and tool information.

Finally, "make sure you pick a tool that you can make money with," Holloway says. "That seems obvious, but if you can't use the tool, can't get access to a car, or it doesn't have the coverage that was implied ... or if you don't have good technical support, is that tool helping you make money?"

The TPMS category is extensive, and with such vast variations in functions, capabilities, and coverage, selecting the proper tool can be challenging or even overwhelming. As a dealer, you can smooth this process by communicating with tool manufacturers, shops, and technicians, so that your customers understand each tool's capabilities and they can select the tool that meets their needs. Helping shops and their technicians stay current in the industry trends, changes in technology, and ever-increasing demand for TPMS servicing will set you apart from the rest. ^{PD}

To read an extended version of this article, visit VehicleServicePros.com/21092242.

Products to Stock



ATEQ VT56

Visit VehicleServicePros.com/20864976 for more information.

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Autel MaxiTPMS TS508

Visit VehicleServicePros.com/21028722 for more information.

Enter #50 at "e-inquiry" on VehicleServicePros.com



Bartec Tech400Pro

Visit VehicleServicePros.com/12096251 for more information.

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BY ALAN SIPE

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Alan W. Sipe has spent the last 42 years in the basic hand tool industry including positions as president of KNIPEX Tools North America, senior vice president of sales and marketing at Klein Tools, manager of special markets at Stanley Tools, and sales manager at toolbox manufacturer Waterloo Industries. Currently, Sipe is the owner of Toolbox Sales and Consulting, a company specializing in sales strategy, structure, development, and training. Sipe can be reached at alansipe@gmail.com or 847-910-1063.

“Yep, I have it right here.”

Be the new product source that your customers count on.

When a technician asks you about a new product that has captured their attention in a magazine, are you the mobile dealer who can say, “Yep, I have it right here”?

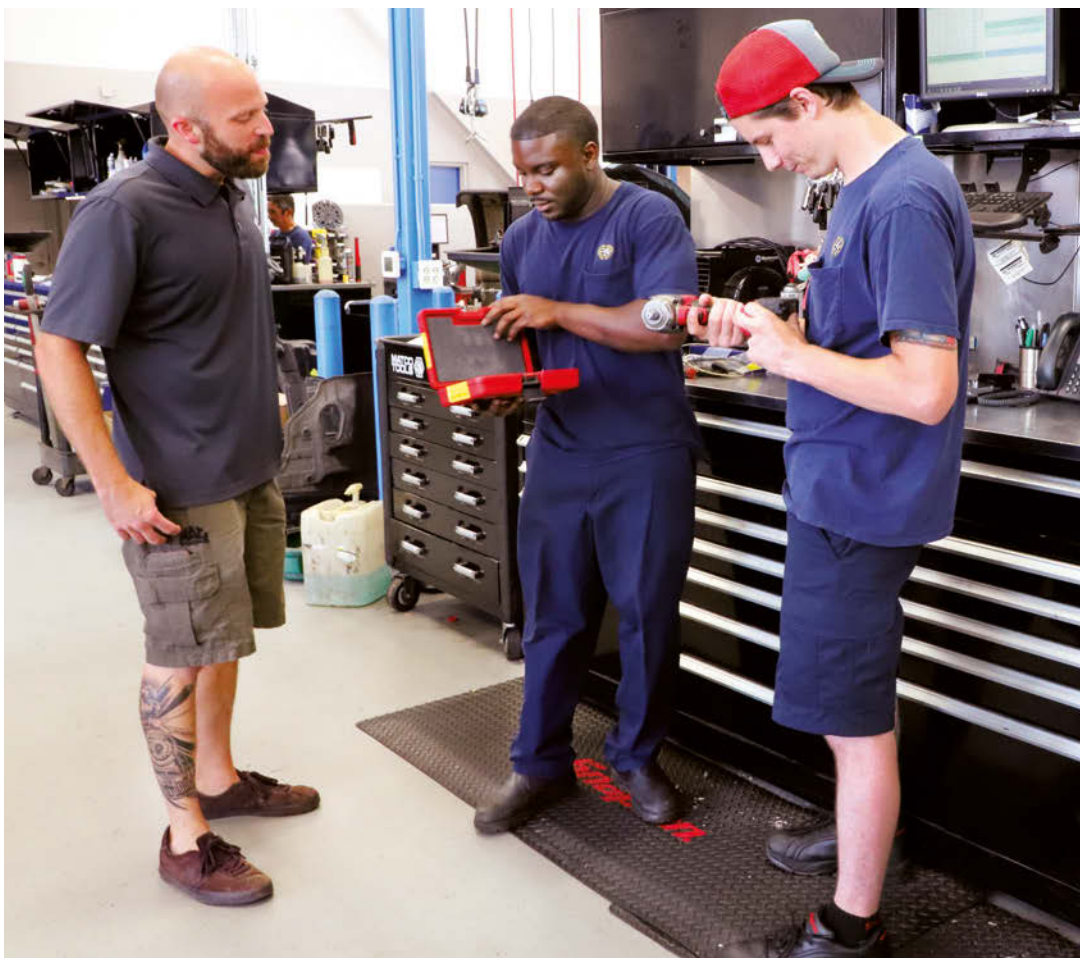
As soon as the J&P motorcycles catalog comes in the mail, I go right to the new products section to see what new chrome doodad I absolutely must have for my Road Glide. Or if it’s raining outside, I’ll say to my wife, “Let’s go to Costco and see what’s new” ... \$300 later I am the proud owner of a \$4.99 rotisserie chicken for dinner and something I never even knew I needed.

WE ALL LIKE TO SEE, AND SOMETIMES BUY, WHAT’S NEW

In the April edition of *Professional Distributor*, the

“Automotive Aftermarket Profile” shows that 83 percent of shop owners and technicians ask their mobile tool dealers about new tools they have seen in trade magazines and catalogs. Just like you looked at the ads in this issue of *PD* for what’s new, your technicians look at *PTEN* for the new items, too. Let’s make sure that you’re the mobile dealer they look to to purchase what’s new.

Sure it’s an investment, but if you are the mobile dealer your customers can count on to have the newest and coolest tools, then you have a great shot at being the mobile dealer they buy their everyday and promotional tools from. The objective here is to get them in your store on wheels to see what’s new and to hopefully purchase something; any impulse buy is more money in your pocket.



Devote a small 2' by 2' section of your mobile store to what's new. Just like an endcap in your local grocery – you see an advertisement on TV or in a magazine and the next time you go shopping there it is right in front of you on an endcap. Invite your customers to come into your store to see your “new product” display and *update this section often*. For more expensive items or items that come in multiple sizes, it may be a good idea to just put a picture cutout on your “What's New” board. This surely will solicit questions, which will lead to sales.

And oh, by the way, don't tell me your mobile store is so stuffed with fast selling products that you can't carve out a 2' by 2' section for a new product display board. We all know darn well that you have an assortment of dogs you've been driving around for the last year or two taking up space while you hope they will sell. Pull those puppies out, rearrange a little, and you're good to go.

If you can put the display someplace near the door, it will attract more attention just like that endcap in the grocery store or that pallet of wine inside the front door at Costco.

I realize that every five to six weeks your suppliers, either your flag or a WD, have a new brochure of promotions that are good deals for you and your customers. Sometimes those promotions are for new items, but quite often they are just as good at helping to sell old line products at a discount, and there is certainly nothing wrong with that. Brochures and promotions are excellent volume builders. Think about it this way: it's up to you if you go that extra mile developing sales with the *really new* stuff that no one else is promoting but you. Be different, be bold, be successful. You might even consider your own flyer to hand out with your monthly promotion

Short circuit your competitors' promotions

You should absolutely have the email address of all your customers in a database. If not, you're missing a real marketing opportunity. You hear that your competitor has a promo on impact sets and screwdriver sets this month. Using Constant Contact or some other email service, send all your customers a marketing piece on your similar products, hyping some features your products have that the competitors don't.



brochure. Call it: “New Stuff on the Truck”.

In retail, the usual thought on new products is to stock “one to go and one to show”. This way, as soon as one sells you still have another to show while you reorder a new backup. If a product is selling, then maybe two or more for inventory is the correct decision.

Many of the flags and WDs have a “new product” introductory program where new tools are discounted, given extra dating, and have special return privileges if the new item doesn't sell. If you are not aware of your company's program, be sure to ask your DM, and don't forget to ask your favorite WD, too.

One other point to remember: if you go through all the effort of developing your own new product board, be sure you read up and understand the major features and benefits of these products. It would be a shame to get a customer interested and not know what these products do.

We would love to see a picture of your own new product board. Email them to alansipe@gmail.com, and we'll highlight some in the coming months.

Now, go sell something! 

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TOOLBOXWIDGET.COM

VETERAN & MECHANIC OWNED

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DENT FIX EQUIPMENT

Shunting Pliers

The Dent Fix Shunting Pliers allow non-conductive coated metals, like an E-Coat, to accept squeeze-type resistance spot welding.

APPLICATION

Allows for STRSW and weld bonding of panels with non-conductive coatings like E-coat or adhesives.

ORIGIN

Dent Fix developed this version of the tool in response to the large number of frustrated customers who, after reading the iCAR bulletin, were unable to source the tool themselves, according to the company. As a result, the Dent Fix Shunting Pliers, No. DF-SP360, were born, and now much of the factory-installed E-coatings on vehicles can be saved during the repair process.

SELLING POINTS

- During the STRSW process, iCAR requires shunting of the current for the first weld when there is a nonconductive coating like E-coat or adhesive on the mating flanges.
- When weld bonding, iCAR requires a dedicated shunting clamp to be used for the best weld performance.
- Helps save the corrosion protective properties of the E-coat since less is removed using shunting pliers.

MANUFACTURING SPECS

Researched, developed, and engineered in the U.S.A. Made in Taiwan.



To watch a video demonstration of this product, visit:
VehicleServicePros.com/21089617

VEHICLESERVICEPROS INC.



FEATURES AND BENEFITS

- Shunts the current - allows for STRSW and weld bonding of panels with non-conductive coatings like E-coat or adhesives.
- **Thick copper wire and pads allow for easy current flow for optimal weld conditions.**
- Saves protective E-coat during the repair process - most of the E-coat on the mating surfaces can be preserved when replacing a part with STRSW through the use of a shunting clamp. The E-coat only has to be removed on the outside surfaces. The shunting clamp is positioned at the first weld site and the first spot weld is made at the adjacent site.
- Easy to use - works like most clamp pliers and holds firmly in place.

The **Dent Fix Shunting Pliers**, No. DF-SP360, allow non-conductive coated metals, like an E-coat, to accept squeeze-type resistance spot welding (STRSW). The heavy duty copper pads and thick wire attachments shunt or redirect the current to bypass the non-conductive coating and eliminate the need to remove the entire coating. To use, remove the coating from only the outside surfaces, position the shunting clamp at the spot weld site, and the spot weld is made at the adjacent site. The current chooses the path of least resistance when confronting the non-conductive E-coat, the shunting pliers facilitate the electrical current from one side to the other, and the E-coat at the mating surface burns away.

STORAGE AND DISPLAY

Individually boxed, one unit per box. For display, suggested placement is next to welding supplies.



SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE

\$58.00



FOR MORE INFORMATION

dentfix.com
Enter #52 at "e-inquiry" on
VehicleServicePros.com

CAL-VAN TOOLS

Wi-Fi Borescope

The Wi-Fi Borescope uses a compact, high-resolution, multiple-aspect camera (up to 1080p), and adjustable LED lighting, to give technicians different views without teardown.

The **Cal-Van Tools Wi-Fi Borescope**, No. 84, uses a compact, high-resolution, multiple-aspect camera (up to 1080p) and adjustable LED lighting to give technicians different views without teardown. With the long 36" bendable cable and camera - both IP67 rated - users can access areas without needing to drain the fluid. The camera's 5.5mm diameter also allows access to tight areas. The borescope is compatible with Android and iOS devices and has an independent Wi-Fi signal up to 30' that allows users to work wirelessly during the inspection. It comes with additional inspection accessories including a viewing mirror, recovery hook, and magnet.

APPLICATION

The Wi-Fi Borescope can be used in any scenario where the user needs to inspect an area they cannot view by any other means. An auto technician can insert the Wi-Fi Borescope into a spark plug port and inspect the combustion chamber. Cooling system-related inspections are also possible thanks to the camera and cable's waterproof design, which protects the borescope from coolant.

ORIGIN

According to the company, Cal-Van wanted to offer customers the opportunity to find their way to owning this type of technology without having to over-spend. Technicians have always had limited access to components, with the only option being teardown. Solutions have found their way into the marketplace, but at a premium not everyone is ready to invest.

MANUFACTURING SPECS

The Wi-Fi Borescope is made in China and has packaged dimensions of 4.61" X 4.04" X 2.08", and weighs 0.05 lbs. The tool has a plastic transmitter with a rechargeable lithium battery, a flexible and sealed cable, a sealed and machined alloy camera housing, six LEDs under the glass, and a sealed camera lens. It also includes three machined alloy attachments.

SELLING POINTS

- Opportunity to offer customers an inexpensive entry into internal/remote inspection technology.
- Cost-effective alternative to similar technology.
- No need to cross-sell other components, as it is packaged with multiple accessories and only needs a smartphone for full operation.
- Compact packaging for minimizing space needed to stock this item; ideal for mobile distributors.

STORAGE AND DISPLAY

Each device is packed in a cardboard box and a full-color sleeve and sold individually. Suggested placement is alongside other diagnostic tools.

FEATURES AND BENEFITS

- High-resolution, multiple aspect camera (1920x1080, 1280x720, and 640x480) with adjustable LED lighting.
- With an independent Wi-Fi signal (approximate range is 30'), there's no need to be connected to a computer.
- Mobile app for both Android (2.3 and up) and iOS (6.0 and up) devices gives users options: image capture, video recording, and album storage.
- Lens and cable are IP67 rated, dust-proof, and waterproof in up to 3' of water for up to 30 minutes. (Transmitter is not rated.)
- Long, bendable cable (36") is flexible yet rigid enough to give users access into hard-to-view areas.
- Compact camera is only 5.5mm in diameter by 35mm in length, allowing users greater access.



SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE

\$79.98



FOR MORE INFORMATION

Cal-Van Tools
800-537-1077
info@calvantools.net
Enter #53 at "e-inquiry" on
VehicleServicePros.com



Long, bendable cable (36") is flexible yet rigid enough to give users access into hard-to-view areas.

ENCON

Veratti 429 AFR with Clear Antifog Lenses

The Veratti 429 AFR are equipped with advanced fog resistance to battle fogging in enclosed and tight areas.

The **Encon Veratti 429 AFR** has an ultra-lightweight frame and lenses that give you total protection. The AFR antifog coating gives technicians the upper hand against fogging issues that are forever present in almost all applications, the company says. The soft gel nose piece provides comfort for long extended wearing periods. Coupled with the no-slip grip on the rear of the temples, this will ensure fit, form, and comfort. The Veratti 429 AFR comes with two color options for lenses: clear (No. 14294014) and gray (No. 14294114).

APPLICATION

The Veratti 429 AFR, No. 14294014, with antifog lenses can be used for eye protection during any type of repair or maintenance.

ORIGIN

The Veratti 429 AFR with antifog lenses were developed to provide eye protection and combat fogging no matter the job.

FEATURES AND BENEFITS

- Ultra-lightweight frame that makes technicians feel they have nothing on.
- Gel nose bridge for extreme comfort and fit, the company says.
- Rubberized temples for comfort with a no-slip grip.
- 9.5 base curve lens for wrap-around protection.



SELLING POINTS

- High impact resistance lenses that meet the ANSI Z87.1 standards.
- Extremely lightweight.
- Advanced fog resistance to battle fogging in enclosed and tight areas.
- Quick and repeat sales.

MANUFACTURING SPECS

The safety glasses have 100 percent high impact polycarbonate lenses and meet and exceed the ANSI standard Z87.1.

STORAGE AND DISPLAY

The Veratti 429 AFR with antifog lenses come 12 units per box.

\$ SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
\$9.29 for each unit

i FOR MORE INFORMATION
Encon Safety
800-283-6266
Enter #54 at "e-inquiry" on
VehicleServicePros.com

MUELLER-KUEPS

Hydraulic Twin/Triple Leg Puller System

The Hydraulic Puller is designed to help remove all kinds of shaft fitted parts such as bushings, wheels, and bearings.



The **Mueller-Kueps Hydraulic Twin/Triple Leg Puller System**, No. 650 700, is designed for removing shaft-fitted parts such as bushings, wheels, bearings, gears, and pulleys. This tool can be used as a two or three leg puller with a self-locking principle. When the user turns the spindle, the hydraulic power forces the legs to close (or lock). The company offers different extensions and leg lengths to give users a wider range of pulling options. The forged steel legs provide improved stiffness to help produce more pulling forces. With just two fingers, users can manually tighten the tool, and the compact design will deliver eight tons of hydraulic RAM, the company says.

APPLICATION

The Hydraulic Puller is designed to help remove all kinds of shaft fitted parts such as bushings, wheels, and bearings.

ORIGIN

At Mueller-Kueps, there was a need for a tool with more power that was still able to be used by hand. Another problem was that tools were slipping while being used, so the self-gripping principle was developed.

SELLING POINTS

- Eight tons of manual hydraulic RAM.
- **The forged steel of the legs provides maximum stiffness and can produce more pulling force.**
- It can be used as a twin or triple leg puller, giving more options to the customer.
- More jaw lengths are available separately, allowing for a wider range of options.

FEATURES AND BENEFITS

- With two fingers users can manually tighten the tool and the compact design will deliver eight tons of hydraulic RAM.
- Features a self-gripping principle, which means the more you turn the more force is exerted on the clamps. In turn, this pushes down the head assembly, which then forces the jaws closed.
- Self-gripping principle to reduce the chance of the tool slipping.
- Using this puller system extends the life of the bearings, says the company.

MANUFACTURING SPECS

This tool is made from forged steel and includes a hydraulic spindle. It provides a total of eight tons of hydraulic RAM and has a total weight of 10 lbs.

STORAGE AND DISPLAY

The tool is shipped in a carbon foam inlay with a cardboard overbox. It displays best laying down in its foam, as it is heavy and can fall out if placed standing up.

\$ SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE
\$598

i FOR MORE INFORMATION
info@mueller-kueps.com
Enter #55 at "e-inquiry" on
VehicleServicePros.com



BY SCOTT "GONZO" WEAVER AND PTEN STAFF

After owning an automotive electrical repair shop in Tulsa, Oklahoma, for more than three decades, ASE Master Tech Scott "Gonzo" Weaver now writes and teaches about the latest automotive technology. As a storyteller, Weaver has hundreds of published humorous and anecdotal stories that can be found on his website, gonzostoolbox.com. He is the author of the book, "Hey Look! I Found the Loose Nut." Email Gonzo at gonzosae@aol.com.

Automotive intel

Translating repair information to the diagnostic tools available.

Information is a key topic of discussion at just about any roundtable regarding automotive repair. Sure, there is always the usual "can't find enough qualified technicians," but all in all, what makes a qualified technician qualified? It's the ability to utilize important information.

As with many different skilled trades, becoming good at your profession requires dedication and training in every aspect of the job, as well as a lot of practice, refresher courses, an abundance of reference materials, good observational skills, and the right tools.

When it comes to tools in our industry, there seems to be some disconnect between reference materials and the tools we use every day. Don't get me wrong, when it comes to good vehicle repair information, there are many sources available. For the most part, with very little practice most technicians are good at obtaining the correct information to diagnose and repair vehicles properly and efficiently.

However, when it comes to operating instructions on our tools, information seems to be somewhat thin, especially on one of our most used pieces of equipment, our scan tools. If you utilize factory (OE) scan tools, most manufacturers have built the tools for the dealership network where technicians that use them have been trained specifically on their use.

If you are an independent aftermarket shop or a technician that does not have a dealership background, you may find there are limited reference manuals for the operation of those scan tools. This lack of information can sometimes make it difficult to diagnose and repair vehicles efficiently. In some cases, it may be worth considering an OE scan tool in addition to the more universal aftermarket ones, if for example, a specific vehicle make comprises 20 percent or more of the vehicles that come to your shop. Of course, you still need to evaluate the cost of the tool, training, and annual updates associated with an OE scan tool in order to calculate the ROI, especially considering it will only be used for one vehicle make, whereas an aftermarket scan tool can often be used for many.

Many of us probably have more than one manufacturer that reaches the 20 percent threshold and

Find out what
shop owners are
reading about in this
month's pages of
PTEN

Photo courtesy of Autologic.



will require more than one OE tool, anyway. We also have a lot of other vehicles that would require a good aftermarket scan tool. Now we have another issue: some technicians are familiar and very proficient with a particular scan tool, but not as comfortable nor as effective with another. Some of this is easily overcome by training on the tool, while some of it is a little more difficult to cure due to differences in how aftermarket tools are programmed and supported.

In order to understand some of the issues, you need to appreciate the challenges scan tool manufacturers face. Almost every vehicle manufacturer has specific names for PIDS, modules, and bidirectional processes that are unique to their vehicles. When using an OE tool, the PID names and functions are consistent with the OE repair information – even more so if you have been trained on the information and use of the tool.

Because every vehicle manufacturer has their own "language," it can be difficult for aftermarket scan tool manufacturers to integrate some tasks and information into an easy-to-use format for the technician. Additional challenges arise when the ➔

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DIAGNOSTIC DISCOURSE

technician is forced to acquire repair information from an aftermarket source and use a scan tool, neither of which may be using terminology that is consistent with each other or the vehicle manufacturer.

Many aftermarket scan tools have renamed the OE specific module/PID/bidirectional terms into a more generic terminology that they use for every vehicle their scan tool supports. This makes it much easier for technicians to use the tool and learn to become efficient with it.

Aftermarket vehicle information sources do much the same thing, make information more usable by naming procedures and tests similarly across vehicle lines to make it easier for technicians to find necessary information quickly, rather than to trying to find manufacturer-specific terminology.

When testing a vehicle with a scan tool, these challenges can cause diagnostic errors. Even though your scan tool is showing a perfectly good test result for a particular component or system, the readings may be in a different form, or in a lot of instances, not even close to what the repair information shows.

You might have to discern whether your scan tool's software doesn't align with the repair information or if you are misinterpreting the information. Some tool manufacturers are aware of this concern. I asked Danijela Haskin, product manager for diagnostics at Bosch, about this discrepancy.

"Bosch licenses data directly from the OEMs and develops other coverage to compliment OE service procedures," she says. "As an example, this is why you'll find Bosch diagnostic tools use the same module system names, rather than putting them in generic terms. This helps when referencing OE information."

Information and test results allow a technician to pinpoint the problems faster and easier than they could



without such data. Having that information is the key to a successful diagnosis.

"The features available on our tools are those specific to that electronic control module for that particular manufacturer you're working with and are not necessarily relatable to a similar engine from a different manufacturer," says Bruno Gattamorta, vice president of diagnostic sales for Cojali USA. "Our tool is developed based on OEM standards, meaning that if the OEM proceeds in a certain way to achieve its tests and results, we will provide the same."

"We match the OE service procedure found in most repair information sources," says Michael Flink, commercial sales manager and trainer, North America, at Autel. "The intent is both to give better overall coverage and to make it easier for the technician to follow an OE service procedure. Autel also updates throughout the year, allowing it to keep up with those changes from the OEs."

THE GOOD TECHNICIAN

This is where the ingenuity of a good technician shines best: That is, taking the raw data offered in the repair manual or scan tool and somehow converting it into useable data that conforms to the tools available. A lot of times, it's a simple matter of converting newton meters to pounds per square inch or

Between design, testing, research and development, and ensuring it supports all manufacturers, a lot goes into creating a diagnostic tool. According to Cojali, this can take over 220 engineers.

Celsius to Fahrenheit. Other times, it's a game of wits between the technician and the repair information. But, adapting the scan tool and repair data into useable information combined with solid diagnostic procedures is the key to successful repairs.

A long time ago, I adopted a policy in my shop where any type of diagnosis had to be verified by performing the diagnostics using two entirely different methods and cross-checking the results between the two procedures. One method could be a scan tool, while the second method could be a multimeter. If the test results were verified by the results of the previous test, the job was a go.

This not only ensured a more accurate diagnosis but also gave the technicians a chance to explore new and innovative testing methods they may not have been as familiar with. For the most part, it avoided the dreaded comebacks and the ever-annoying (and present) technician dilemma of the "well, that isn't it" scenario.

SCAN TOOLS: WHAT IS THE TECHNICIAN LOOKING FOR IN A TOOL?

The number one thing I look for in a

WORK SMARTER NOT HARDER

scan tool is coverage. First, a scan tool needs to have the coverage for the type of vehicle I'm most typically going to be working on, with access to as many forms of the tests and bidirectional controls similar to the factory tool, if not better. Good coverage for a few other manufacturers' vehicles on the same scan tool is a plus. This avoids having to relearn different terminology and computer pages that are likely to differ from one manufacturer to another.

Graphing and pinpointing sensor data is a great feature, too, especially when it is easy to use and understand. Whether using a factory or aftermarket tool, it comes down to cost, updates, and the number of years covered by that manufacturer.

Things like data speed and touch-screen resolution come to mind as additional concerns, as technicians don't always work in ideal lighting conditions. Autel's Flink had this to say on features and functionality:

"Because Autel does not make an OE tool, our primary customer is the independent technician and shop. We engineer and test our tools to provide functionality beyond the standard releases. This does require extra work and cost in engineering to accomplish. Since Autel only makes diagnostic equipment, our vast engineering teams are focused on developing just that."

Also consider adequate test leads, a sturdy hanger for the scan tool, and an adjustable volume level. Cord connections can be a problem, too. The weak point is often where the connection and the wire bundle meet. Although, cords are getting to be a thing of the past with the advent of the wireless dongle between the scan tool and the assembly line diagnostic link (ALDL). Now the only problem is not forgetting to remove the dongle before the car drives off.

UPDATES

Updates, updates, updates. This may be the biggest consideration of all. It's the

downtime that is the real issue. The fact that some scan tools will display a message such as "Erasing old data" before they begin downloading the new data is a bit unnerving as well.


Some manufacturers, such as Ford, will provide the dates of the next projected updates for their scan tools so you have the option to schedule scan tool downtime. I don't believe there is ever a good time for downtime in a busy shop, but it's essential to update these tools on time, nonetheless.

FINAL THOUGHTS

With all this going on, there is still one aspect of the topic that needs a closer look. That is how to hook up the tool leads, the locations of the sensor, and the pin locations for the component you are trying to obtain the information about. Some manufacturers do a great job of providing drawings and directions for tool connections, but it is still one of the most frequently asked questions.

The novice or new apprentice/technician might not have paid attention to the initial process of hooking up the scope or scan tool, as they were far more interested in the results. When it's time to try it for themselves, they are left standing there holding the test leads and wondering what to do next.

The key is to keep honing your skills every day. This business of car repair is based on ever changing and advancing technologies. All this automotive intel can only increase a technician's knowledge base as well as their ability to adapt to the latest technologies coming from various manufacturers.

The vehicles are better and so are the technicians. It would be great if every time you picked up a scan tool or looked up repair information, the answers would pour out with no effort at all. Well, you know that'll never happen. This job isn't that simple, it never was, and it still takes a dedicated technician to answer the call of the next problem and the next solution. Happy scanning! 

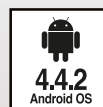


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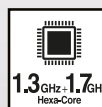


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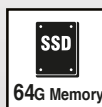
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DRIVING SALES

Tool Storage

Tool Storage

Tools are a big investment for technicians, so keeping them safe and well organized is imperative. Here are some products that can help technicians sort and secure their tools and keep them within easy reach.

ROLLS UP FOR EASY TRANSPORT

The **CAY Industries Socket Roll Pro** is a portable tool organizer that offers a clearly-labeled and easily stowable container for sockets, wrenches, and drives. The Socket Roll Pro holds 66 tools of the most common metric sockets and drives (1/4", 3/8", and 1/2"), in addition to the universal joint, extension and ratchet for each drive, and a standard 5/8" spark plug socket. The back of the organizer features six wrench slots for quick access. The organizer rolls into a compact carrying case for easy transport.

Enter #74 at "e-inquiry" on
VehicleServicePros.com



FLEXIBLE, NON-SLIP TOOL TRAYS

Grypmat flexible tool trays feature a grip that will keep your tools from sliding off almost any surface you work on. The trays are heat resistant up to 500 degrees F and resistant to harsh chemicals. When the job is done, clean with soap and water.

Enter #65 at "e-inquiry" on
VehicleServicePros.com



FOR VERSATILE STORAGE

The **GEARWRENCH Tool Totes** are available in two styles to suit user needs. The 16" Metal Handle Tool Tote, No. 83146, is a heavy duty option for carrying supplies, with interior and exterior pockets for versatile storage. The shoulder strap is built for comfort, and the reinforced bottom helps ensure durability. The 16" Soft Sided Tool Bag, No. 83147, has a reinforced handle and is suitable for any weather conditions.

Enter #60 at "e-inquiry" on
VehicleServicePros.com



SLIDING STORAGE DRAWERS WITH ROLLERS

The **Ascot Heavy Duty Tire Repair Cabinet** is built to withstand heavy use. The cabinet has three storage levels and features two convenient sliding storage drawers inside with rollers for ease of use. An optional shelf is available for an additional storage level. The two inside doors are equipped with two tool hook sets for easy and quick access to tools. The cabinet also features a convenient switch-to-open handle on the front. The cabinet is 19.6" x 10" x 26" in size and weighs 36 lbs.

Enter #63 at "e-inquiry" on
VehicleServicePros.com

WORK TOP FLIPS UP FOR EXTRA STORAGE

The **Monster Mobile 36" Green Heavy Duty Professional Cart**, No. MST3605, offers an 800-lb load capacity. The sliding top compartment's inner size is 35.9" wide, 21.7" deep, and 7.7" high. The slide work top surfaces flip up to provide extra storage areas. Four 5" by 2" heavy duty casters enable smooth mobility, and the rounded frame edges help provide dent protection for painted surfaces. The cart offers latching drawers with PVC drawer liners, and includes a one-year warranty.

Enter #61 at "e-inquiry" on
VehicleServicePros.com



DOZENS OF OPTIONS TO FIT USER NEEDS

The **Homak RS Pro CTS (Centralized Tool Storage) Combo** offers a variety of options and solutions for the user's tool storage and organization needs. This unit offers dozens of possible combinations, so users can find the right solution. The CTS transforms the company's RS Pro and Pro II Roller Cabinets into a professional work station.

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VehicleServicePros.com





DESIGNED IN-FIELD FOR OPTIMAL STORAGE

The **Mac Tools EDGE Series Roller Cabinet** is designed for beginning technicians and young professionals who need a high performance toolbox at an inexpensive price point. The EDGE comes in a standard 12-drawer configuration developed in the field to optimize storage. The cabinet is available in a single matte black paint color with five different anodized trim options. It has 125-lb soft-close drawers, 1,000-lb casters, and an assortment of accessories and add-ons are available.

Enter #66 at "e-inquiry" on VehicleServicePros.com

STEEL STORAGE SOLUTION

The **Milwaukee 40" Steel Work Cart** is constructed with a reinforced frame, 5" industrial casters, and has a 700-lb weight capacity. The cart includes 100-lb soft-close drawer slides, built-in power center for instant access to power, removable storage cups, and an integrated wire spool holder. The 40" steel work cart also comes equipped with movable utility shelves.

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MODULAR DESIGN WITH STRONG MAGNETS

The **ToolBox Widget Wrench Organizer** is an independent modular tool organizing system for the toolbox. This tool organizer allows users to add or subtract and choose the exact number of holders they need. The widgets can save up to 30 to 40 percent of space to maximize toolbox drawer room, according to the company. Features include a modular design, strong magnets, missing tool indicators, changeable size labels, and a flexible material. Each kit holds 14 wrenches, 1-3/4" tall, and magnets are a 5-lb pull each.

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DRIVING SALES

Tool Storage



HEAVY DUTY CONSTRUCTION

The **Versatility Mechanics' Double-Bank Tool Box**, No. VT-55314, comes standard with 10 drawers and offers custom drawer configurations. Technicians have the flexibility to create the tool storage center that best fits their needs by adding accessories like a hutch or side cabinet. The 55" tool-box features single key locking and Slam Lock, which allows open drawers to be closed with the key in the locked position. Optional brushed stainless steel top creates a work surface; black vinyl worktop is standard.

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91-PC GENERAL MAINTENANCE TOOL BOX

The **Beta Easy 2120L-E/T91-E Cantilever Tool Box** from **Beta Tools** is a general maintenance, cantilever sheet metal tool box that organizes 91 tools in plastic thermoformed trays. The tool box includes 1/2" drive sockets (10mm-24mm, 27mm, 30mm, and 32mm), universal joint 1-125mm extension, 1-250mm extension with 1/2" sliding drive, 1/2" drive reversible ratchet, combination wrenches (8-19mm), six slotted screwdrivers, four Phillips screwdrivers, 31-pc bit set in a plastic case, utility knife with blades, pliers (10" slip joint, 6" diagonal, 6" needle nose, and 7" combination pliers), and hex key wrenches (1.5mm, 2mm, 2.5mm, 3mm-6mm, 8mm, and 10mm) in a plastic carry folder.

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KEEPS TOOLS WITHIN REACH

The **Guardair Corporation QuickSelect Tool Rack** is designed to organize frequently used shop tools and keep them within easy reach. Made from heavy duty aluminum, the QuickSelect features 15 slots and holes sized to accommodate popular tools including Allen wrenches, dead blow hammers, screwdrivers, and safety air guns. The tool rack also features a 1-3/4" hole lined with a plastic bushing for storing sensitive instruments such as tool holders or gauges. The QuickSelect is available in two versions, one for mounting and another with high-strength magnets for steel surfaces.

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The **Klein Tools Tradesman Pro Tool Master Rolling Tool Bag**, No. 55473RTB, enables professionals to easily transport tools and materials through harsh job site conditions with rugged 8" wheels. The rolling tool bag features a hard top allowing for stacking of additional materials and is contoured to safely hold cell phones, beverages, or small parts. It holds 250 lbs and is water-resistant. The lid closes shut with a metal latch.

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EASY ACCESS TO SMALL PARTS

The **Mueller-Kueps Magnetic Parts Bowls**, No. 905 007, store small parts, such as nuts and bolts, while working on a car. The durable bowls feature a rubber-coated magnet that makes it easy to use the bowls horizontally or vertically. They can hang from a car or be hoisted or placed on a cart without scratching the surface. The bowls are available in neon green, neon orange, gray, or dark blue.

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The **Sonic Tools Quick Service Solutions Tool Cart** is designed for quick lane and express lane service needs. The S9, S10, and service cart plus tools options offer users a variety of choices, depending on the caliber of toolbox desired. The Quick Lane and Express Lane offerings are designed to create organization, increase efficiency, and add value to the user's bottom line.

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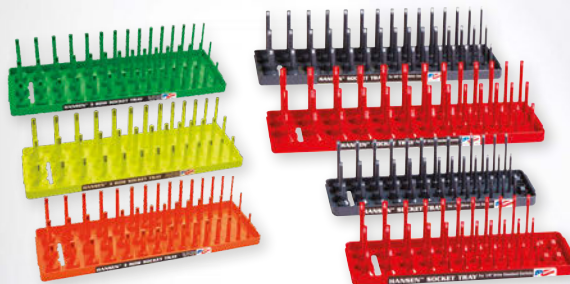
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**BY KAYLA OSCHMANN,
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From sharpshooter to tool dealer

Nigel Clarke, previously a professional shotgun competitor, is now a family-driven tool dealer.

Nigel Clarke of Fleming Island, Florida, has been a Mac Tools dealer for nearly seven years. He first started selling Mac Tools in 2013 for Big Boy Tools, a tool company comprised of five tool distributors in and around Virginia Beach, Virginia. Just under four years in, Clarke decided to branch off and start his own route in Jacksonville, Florida.

His route now covers part of Northeast Florida, from Jacksonville to Orange Park, Fleming Island, and Green Cove Springs. Most dealerships he serves are independents; however, his biggest dealership and customer is General RV, a national RV dealer.

Prior to becoming a tool dealer, Clarke was a competitive shotgun shooter and traveled around the country taking part in professional competitions. All the traveling meant he was away from his wife and family, so he decided to look for a career that would bring him home to be with them. Becoming a tool distributor was a great fit.

"[Starting my own route] had its challenges, but it has been rewarding for our family ... being able to have a business that we can set up and run as our own and make our own schedule," Clarke says. "It went extremely well the first year; we set some impressive numbers." In fact, Clarke made Mac Tools' President's Club for overall purchases in the U.S. for both 2017 and 2018.

Clarke's wife, Tamiekah, handles all the "behind the scenes" work, such as paperwork, invoices, and checking in all the inventory, while Clarke is out in front of the customers. Of their three children, the two oldest boys, Payton, 14, and Noah, 10, also help on the truck from time to time. Their daughter, who is just seven years old, doesn't help quite yet, he says.

So, what are Clarke's sales techniques that have customers coming back?

"I'm not pushy," he says. "I don't try to force the customer to make a purchase. I listen to what they want. It may not be on my truck that day, but if I know I'm going back there the next week then I make sure I have a couple of options of what they are looking for."

And, he's honest.

"Honesty goes a long way," he adds. "[Customers]



Top: Clarke made Mac Tools' President's Club for overall purchases in the U.S. for both 2017 and 2018.

Above: Clarke and his wife decided to start their own route in December 2016.

may ask me for something, and rather than give them an answer that really isn't true or I'm not 100 percent certain [of], I'll tell them that I'm not sure and that I'll get back to them with the correct answer."

Clarke will also go out of his way to get a tool to a customer to complete his job. Even if that means driving from one side of Jacksonville to the other or communicating with other Mac Tool dealers in the area.

"Reaching out to other resources will only make you more successful," Clarke concludes. "What I've learned in seven years is that honesty goes a long way with customers and ... I've learned that if you can be the tool truck that [customers] call first, then you've earned their respect and they will call you first in any situation."

As for future plans, Clarke would like to expand his business.

"I would love to have an employee and possibly a second truck to get to a point where we have two routes that we can manage," he concludes. **PD**

What's your story?

Have an interesting experience to share with your fellow distributors?

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