

OEC EXPERT INSIGHTS

Mechanical Industry Insights

Q&A with an OEC expert



OEC mechanical repair industry expert Stephany Love shares her perspective on how current market trends, inflation, and customer behaviors influence mechanical repair shops. She also offers insights into how shops can adjust to these changes, highlighting real-world examples and actionable advice.

What are some of the current trends affecting the mechanical repair industry?

One of the most significant trends we're seeing is that people are holding onto their cars longer than ever. Consumers are stretching the lifespan of their vehicles, and at the same time, many of these same people own more than one vehicle. We're seeing car sales return to pre-pandemic levels, but inflation and economic uncertainty, especially with the upcoming election, really impact whether people spend on repairs, including routine maintenance.

How has this trend impacted both mechanical and collision repairs?

Year-over-year repairs have decreased for many repairers, causing a significant impact across the industry. This slowdown really started around mid-2024, and it's part of a larger overall trend. Customers are definitely becoming more price-conscious, and shops have to adjust. OEM promotions are becoming more important too—they help shops offer quality parts at better prices.

What are some of the biggest challenges repair shops are facing when it comes to sourcing parts?

Sourcing parts affordably has become a real challenge for shops. They're trying to maintain high-quality work but have to juggle that with finding parts that won't break the bank. A lot of shops are saying that they're relying more on promotions and discounts—whether that's from OEMs or suppliers—so they can continue providing top-notch repairs while keeping costs under control.

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How are shops adjusting their marketing strategies to deal with the decline in service volume?

Marketing has become even more critical now. Shops are really working hard to attract new customers and retain the ones they have. For example, [RepairLink](#) has been a big help to shops by providing access to discounted OEM parts through special promotions. Those deals allow shops to stay competitive, all while ensuring customers are still getting quality parts for their vehicles.

What strategies do you recommend for shops to overcome these challenges?

Shops need to take advantage of OEM parts promotions and loyalty programs. They should look at what's available through leading parts ordering platforms, where they might, as an example, get something like \$50 off a \$250 parts cart. These kinds of promotions help shops keep their costs down but also ensure they're still using quality parts, which is important for maintaining safety.

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How are dealerships adjusting to the decline in parts sales?

Dealers are facing the same struggles. Parts departments have seen sales slow, so they're turning to new marketing solutions to try and re-engage with repair shops and customers who haven't made recent purchases. They're using marketing campaigns to get those customers back by offering promotions and encouraging repeat purchases.

What advice would you give to repair shops dealing with these market conditions?

Stay focused on customer satisfaction. Even with the slowdown, it's crucial to continue delivering high-quality service. Customers remember that, and when the market picks back up, those relationships will be more important than ever. Shops should also take full advantage of available promotions. With these promotions, they can navigate these challenges successfully by keeping costs down without sacrificing quality.

Can you share a customer success story related to these strategies?

One great example is a partnership between RepairLink and Shopmonkey. Through their integration, shops can pull OEM parts information directly into their shop management systems with just a click, eliminating the need for manual data entry. This has helped shops improve efficiency, reduce errors, and still offer customers the high-quality parts they need. It's a win-win for everyone involved.

Meet the Expert

Stephany Love, OEC Senior Product Manager, Mechanical, has 12+ years of software and automotive wholesale experience. Stephany oversees RepairLink, the OEC mechanical parts ordering and order management platform, driving platform enhancements & strategic development. Throughout her career, Stephany has established strong relationships with both shops and dealers, providing her with invaluable insights into both sides of the parts procurement process and positioning her as a mechanical parts wholesale expert.

