

VOLUME

08

APRIL 2026

AutoPulse

Community initiative by **GaragePlug**

— EXCLUSIVE MAGAZINE FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE INDUSTRY PROFESSIONALS —

#AUTOSERVICE2.0

THE VOICE OF LEADERSHIP & TRANSFORMATION

Conversations that
drive the future of
auto service.

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EXCLUSIVE CONVERSATION

WITH LEADERS SHAPING AUTO SERVICE 2.0



LEADERS UNDER PRESSURE

Leading through disruption
and uncertainty



LEADING A LARGE COMPANY WITH MULTIPLE BUSINESS VERTICALS

Building scale. Driving synergy.
Creating value.



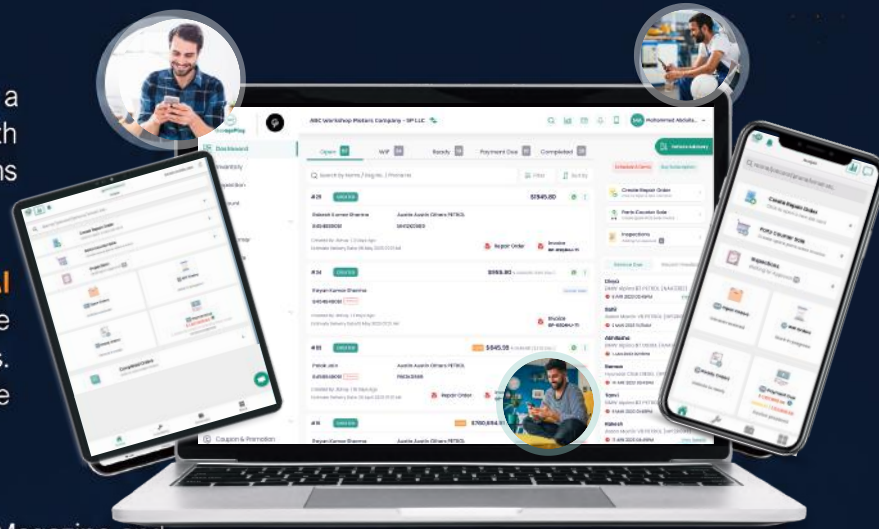
GROWTH STRATEGIES

Ideas, innovation and
what's next

ABOUT THE **AUTOPULSE** INITIATIVE BY **GARAGEPLUG**

The automotive aftermarket service industry has a reputation problem. Consumers often view it with suspicion, and valuable knowledge seems concentrated within a select few.

We at **GaragePlug**, an automotive service AI solutions tech company passionate about the auto service industry's potential, recognised this. We saw that true improvement could only come through collective growth and rising standards.



This realisation fueled the creation of AutoPulse Magazine and the non-profit community initiative behind it. We, at GaragePlug, believe that one company's success isn't enough. **The industry needs a platform to bridge the knowledge gap and empower everyone.**

AutoPulse offers a unique space for industry leaders to share their thought leadership without ego or fear of competition. We believe that by fostering collaboration and open exchange, the entire industry can thrive.

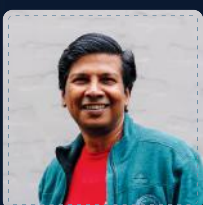
This is where GaragePlug's experience with digital transformation comes in. We understand the challenges faced by automotive service businesses firsthand. Through AutoPulse, we aim to share not just industry secrets, but also the power of technology in achieving those high standards.

AutoPulse is more than a magazine; it's a call to action. We invite you, the reader, to not only gain knowledge but also contribute your expertise. Let's build a future where innovation and technology are synonymous with the aftermarket service industry. Together, we can transform the industry's reputation and unlock its true potential.

Join us on this journey. Read AutoPulse, contribute your knowledge, and let's watch the industry rise, together.

HAPPY READING!

- TEAM **AUTOPULSE** + TEAM **GARAGEPLUG**



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“ THE AUTOPULSE LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2025 ”

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARDS Q4 2025 RIYADH EDITION



Majid Almadi – AcDelco & AlJomaih

Recognised for driving AI-enabled aftersales performance across AlJomaih Automotive's eight sales channels, improving profitability, customer trust, and market share through disciplined inventory strategy and operational efficiency.

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARDS Q4 2025



Bassim Khan – Wafi Energy

Recognised for building Wafi's car service division from the ground up and scaling it sustainably through structured execution, operational discipline, and consistent performance improvement.

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARDS Q4 2025 JEDDAH EDITION



Ijaz Ali – Shift Inc

Ijaz led the Aramco 17 QS PMS project and launched 11 mobile workshops, significantly improving cost control, customer satisfaction, and operational transparency across Shift Inc's network.

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARDS Q4 2025 JEDDAH EDITION



Abdulkader Adam – Motocare

Abdulkader reversed a loss-making business into a profitable operation through strategic discipline, decisive downsizing/ restructuring, and consistent focus on efficiency, performance, and customer trust at Motocare.

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARDS Q4 2025 DUBAI EDITION



Richard Flanagan – HDX

Richard built a workshop capable of supporting a 1,800-truck fleet – designing the facility, defining SOPs, and engineering workflows with precision. A benchmark for disciplined operations.

LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE AWARDS Q4 2025 DUBAI EDITION



Wajih ul Hasan – Petromin Intl.

Wajih led Petromin Express' international expansion – UAE, Malaysia, Egypt, Pakistan and more – with long-term belief and operational sharpness. His work anchors Petromin's global after-sales footprint.



WHAT'S IN THIS MAGAZINE?

VOLUME
08

APRIL 2026

— Featuring top auto service industry leaders —



PROLOGUE – (AUTOPULSE COMMUNITY REFLECTION)

AutoPulse Research -

The New Shape of Automotive Aftersales: From Repair Networks to Intelligent Service Ecosystems

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AUTOPULSE RESEARCH

THE NEW SHAPE OF AUTOMOTIVE AFTERSALES: FROM REPAIR NETWORKS TO INTELLIGENT SERVICE ECOSYSTEMS

As vehicles become electric, connected, software-defined and harder to repair, the aftermarket is entering a new operating era - one where workshops must combine technical skill, digital systems, data visibility, and customer experience to stay competitive.

The automotive service industry is no longer being shaped only by vehicle age, mileage, and routine maintenance demand. A deeper shift is underway. Vehicles are becoming more electric, more connected, more software-led, and more dependent on calibration, diagnostics, data access, and specialized technician capability.

For workshops, dealer networks, tyre chains, quick-service brands, and aftermarket operators, this changes the economics of service.

The next phase of aftersales will not be won only through more bays, more technicians, or more locations. It will be won through smarter service models, better operational visibility, and the ability to convert complexity into customer trust.

The global automotive service market is projected to grow from US\$771.6 billion in 2026 to US\$978.1 billion by 2034, showing that demand for professional service remains strong. But the nature of that demand is changing fast. Growth is increasingly tied to vehicle complexity, ADAS, EV readiness, software-led diagnostics, and higher expectations for service quality.

The biggest shift: repair is becoming intelligence-led

A modern service visit is no longer just about replacing a part. It increasingly involves understanding vehicle data, software behaviour, electronic systems, safety sensors, battery condition, calibration needs, and customer communication history.

This is pushing the aftermarket toward an intelligence-led model where workshops need:

- Better diagnostic capability
- Stronger technician training
- Connected service records
- Real-time operational visibility
- Digital inspection and approval workflows
- Predictive service reminders
- More structured customer communication

The winners will not be the businesses that only repair more cars. They will be the ones that know more about every car, every customer, every technician, and every service opportunity.



AUTOPULSE RESEARCH

Five forces reshaping automotive aftersales

1. ADAS is becoming a daily repair requirement

Advanced Driver Assistance Systems are no longer limited to premium vehicles. Cameras, radars, sensors, lane-assist systems, adaptive cruise control, and emergency braking systems are now entering mainstream repair volumes.

This is changing collision, glass, tyre, alignment, and mechanical work. A simple bumper repair, windshield replacement, suspension job, or wheel alignment can now trigger a calibration requirement. Kia's approval of Hunter Engineering's ADAS alignment and calibration system for its North American dealer and collision network is one example of OEMs formalizing calibration standards across service networks.

For workshops, ADAS creates both risk and opportunity. The risk is improper repair, liability, and lost jobs due to lack of equipment. The opportunity is higher-value service work, stronger differentiation, and deeper trust with customers.

2. EVs are moving from sales headlines to service reality

EV adoption may not grow evenly in every market, but EVs are already changing the service equation.

The EV aftermarket is projected to reach US\$272.5 billion by 2030, driven by aging EV fleets, battery-centric maintenance, charging support, digital diagnostics, and new service models.

This does not mean every workshop must become an EV specialist overnight. But it does mean every serious service network must begin preparing for mixed-fleet operations.

EV service readiness includes:

- Battery health inspection
- High-voltage safety processes
- Technician certification
- Thermal-management knowledge
- EV tyre wear understanding
- Charging-related support
- Software and diagnostic capability

The real transition will not be "ICE to EV" in one jump. It will be mixed workshops servicing petrol, diesel, hybrid, and electric vehicles side by side.

3. Software-defined vehicles are changing the meaning of service

Cars are becoming software platforms. Deloitte notes that software-defined vehicles are expected to account for at least 90% of the new-vehicle market by 2029. This changes how vehicles are diagnosed, updated, repaired, and monetised.

For aftersales, this creates a new question: who owns the service relationship when the vehicle can be updated remotely, monitored continuously, and diagnosed through cloud-connected systems?

Workshops will need to understand software faults, OTA updates, cybersecurity restrictions, data access, subscription features, and digital maintenance alerts. The physical workshop remains important, but the service journey starts much earlier- often inside the vehicle, app, dashboard, or customer communication channel.

AUTOPULSE RESEARCH

4. Diagnostics is becoming the new frontline

The global advanced automotive diagnostic tools market is estimated at US\$6.4 billion in 2026 and projected to reach US\$12.8 billion by 2036. The growth is being driven by the rising complexity of vehicles, IoT integration, cloud diagnostics, AI-enabled troubleshooting, and demand for faster fault detection.

This makes diagnostics a core business capability, not just a technical function. Better diagnostics means faster decisions, more accurate estimates, less rework, higher approval rates, and stronger customer confidence.

5. Circular economy is entering aftersales

Automotive aftersales is also being pulled toward reuse, recycling, and circular-economy models. Stellantis recently opened its first Middle East and Africa vehicle dismantling centre in Morocco, signalling a stronger push toward reused parts, recycling, and lifecycle-based value creation.

For service networks, this could create new models around parts availability, cost control, sustainability, and alternative repair options for customers.

What this means for workshops, dealers, tyre chains, and service networks

The old operating model is under pressure. For years, many service businesses grew through location expansion, brand trust, customer relationships, and technician skill.

Those factors still matter. But they are no longer enough.

A modern service business must now operate across five layers:

-1 Customer layer

How quickly inquiries are answered, bookings are captured, approvals are secured, and repeat visits are generated.

-2 Workshop layer

How jobs move through inspection, estimation, parts, technician allocation, bay utilization, quality check, and delivery.

-3 Technical layer

How the business handles diagnostics, EVs, ADAS, software faults, calibrations, and complex repairs.

-4 Data layer

How the business tracks demand, lost opportunities, technician productivity, revenue leakage, customer behavior, and location-wise performance.

-5 Intelligence layer

How AI, automation, predictive maintenance, and connected systems improve decisions across the business.

The businesses that connect these layers will move faster than those that manage them separately.

The conclusion

Automotive aftersales is entering a more complex but more valuable phase. Demand will continue to grow, but the winners will be different.

The next leaders will not just own workshops. They will own connected service ecosystems. They will combine people, process, technology, data, and intelligence into one operating model. And in a market where vehicles are becoming smarter, the smartest service businesses will win.

GENERAL INDUSTRY & AFTERMARKET NEWS

The global automotive service market is projected to grow from US\$771.6B in 2026 to US\$978.1B by 2034, driven by aging vehicles, higher repair complexity, and rising demand for professional maintenance.

- The U.S. aftermarket remains resilient, with S&P Global noting expected growth after strong performance in 2024–25, but tariffs, supply-chain exposure, and parts cost volatility are becoming major pressure points for the industry.
- AAPEX's 2026 State of the Automotive Aftermarket Survey highlights uncertainty as a key industry challenge, with respondents pointing to tariffs, rising costs, and customers delaying non-essential repairs.
- The global EV aftermarket is projected to reach US\$272.5B by 2030, as aging EV fleets create demand for battery diagnostics, software services, charging support, and digital service ecosystems.
- The EV maintenance market alone is expected to grow from US\$28B in 2026 to US\$96.1B by 2035, making EV service readiness a serious growth opportunity for workshops and aftersales networks.
- Stellantis has opened its first Middle East and Africa vehicle dismantling centre in Morocco, signalling a bigger move toward reused parts, recycling, and circular-economy models in automotive aftersales.

INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY NEWS

- ADAS calibration is becoming a mainstream repair requirement. Kia has approved Hunter Engineering's ADAS alignment and calibration system for its North American dealer and collision repair network, making Kia the eighth OEM to approve the system.
- The global ADAS calibration services market is projected to grow from US\$5.79B in 2026 to US\$12.85B by 2034, as more collision, glass, alignment, and mechanical repairs require sensor recalibration.
- Kinetic is scaling robotic ADAS calibration hubs in the U.S., with one hub reportedly able to service up to 80 vehicles per day and plans to expand to 20 U.S. locations by the end of 2026.
- Stellantis and Microsoft have signed a five-year AI partnership covering more than 100 AI-driven initiatives, including predictive maintenance, digital services, cybersecurity, and cloud modernization.
- Amazon is expanding into automotive supply-chain services, offering freight, warehousing, fulfilment, and last-mile delivery support- a move that could influence parts logistics, aftermarket distribution, and service-network speed.
- Connected-vehicle regulation is tightening. The U.S. connected vehicles rule reached a major compliance milestone in March 2026, increasing pressure on OEMs and suppliers around vehicle software, data, cybersecurity, and supply-chain risk.





BUILT THROUGH PEOPLE, GROWN THROUGH TRUST

AUTOPULSE TEAM IN CONVERSATION WITH BRAD TEMPLIN



BRAD TEMPLIN

COO –

Scott's U-Save Tires &
Auto Repair



Brad Templin is the COO of Scott's U-Save Tires & Auto Repair, where he is helping build a strong, customer-focused auto repair brand. With a clear vision for teamwork, shared goals, and community impact, Brad represents a new generation of operators shaping growth through culture, service excellence, and strong leadership.





AutoPulse Team: Brad, let's start with your own journey. What first drew you into the automotive service industry, and how did that path eventually lead you to Scott's U-Save Tires & Auto Repair?

Brad: I started out not thinking I would ever do this or work for my family. I went to Purdue for Aerospace Engineering. After graduation, I worked at a fluid control company. It was once I went back to get my MBA at UofM that I thought about going back into the family business. The opportunity to grow something for our family and myself is really what pulled me back in and has motivated me to expand the business.

AutoPulse Team: So the family business was not always the plan.

Brad: No, not at all. My education and early work were taking me somewhere else. But when I was doing my MBA, I started thinking differently about what I wanted to build. I saw real potential in the business and felt there was an opportunity to help take it further. That is what brought me back.

AutoPulse Team: When you came in, what became clear to you very early?

Brad: How much does this business depend on people? You can talk about operations, service, and systems, but at the end of the day, the team is doing the work every day. They are the ones taking care of customers and carrying the standard.

SCALING WITHOUT LOSING WHAT BUILT THE BUSINESS

AutoPulse Team: Scott's U-Save has grown into a multi-location regional operation. What has defined your operating philosophy as the business scaled?

Brad: We focus on our internal teams. They do the heavy lifting every day. As well, we constantly reinforce a culture of customer first mindset. We have been known for our customer service for 45 years.

AutoPulse Team: That customer-first culture has been part of the business for decades. How do you make sure it stays real as the company grows?

Brad: You have to keep reinforcing it. You cannot assume it will just continue by itself. As you grow, it becomes even more important to stay intentional about it. It has to show up in how people work, how they communicate, and how customers are treated every day.

AutoPulse Team: What helps you know whether those standards are holding across locations?

Brad: We constantly strive to get better, but we also heavily monitor Google reviews, customer surveys, and always seek customer feedback. This lets us know we are providing great service that keeps people coming back.





AutoPulse Team: So, customer feedback is part of how you manage consistency.

Brad: Yes. It gives you a very direct view of whether the customer experience matches the standard you want to hold. It helps you see what is working and where you need to improve.

AutoPulse Team: A lot of operators talk about consistency, but once they expand, it becomes harder to maintain. What changes when you move from one store to multiple?

Brad: You cannot rely on the owner being there all the time. At one location, the owner can often see everything, solve things quickly, and keep the standard close. Once you grow, that changes. Then you need stronger people, better habits, and a clearer way of checking whether the business is actually being run the way it should be.

WHY THE TIRE AND SERVICE MODEL WORKS

AutoPulse Team: Your business combines tire retail with full mechanical service. What makes that model work so well for you?

Brad: It works very well. It allows us to gain volume, car count, doing tires which then leads to brakes, suspension repair, and other issues. The tire aspect of the business keeps people coming back for tire rotations and makes them a sticky customer.

AutoPulse Team: That repeat interaction seems important.

Brad: It is. Tires bring people in, but they also bring them back. Rotations and ongoing tire needs create more touchpoints. Over time, that builds familiarity and trust. Then when other issues come up, there is already a relationship there.



AutoPulse Team: So the value is not only in volume, but in continuity.

Brad: Exactly. It helps keep the customer connected to the business over time, and that matters.

AutoPulse Team: How do you balance fast-moving tire work with heavier mechanical repair?

Brad: We have service advisors that work on certain aspects of the sales process. Some advisors are heavily tires and GS work while others focus on heavy mechanical.

AutoPulse Team: Why is that separation useful?

Brad: Because the work is different. Tires and GS work move one way, while heavy mechanical requires a different conversation and a different level of detail. Organizing around that helps the process run better and helps customers get the right kind of communication.



THE MISTAKE MANY INDEPENDENT SHOPS MAKE WHEN THEY EXPAND

AutoPulse Team: Many independent workshops want to grow into multi-location businesses, but a lot of them struggle when they try. What are the biggest mistakes owners make?

Brad: I think they expand without having a solid team at store one that can survive without the owner. Secondly, when you start to expand you have to delegate and let go of the day to day. You can't sell every ticket, you can't help every customer, you can't fix every problem. To grow you have to be comfortable letting your team grow too.

AutoPulse Team: That first point is a big one. The original store has to be stable before it can become the base for growth.

Brad: Yes. If everything still runs through the owner, expansion gets difficult very quickly. Before you add locations, you need a team at store one that can operate well without the owner being involved in every detail.



AutoPulse Team: And then comes the harder leadership shift.

Brad: Delegation. That is where a lot of owners struggle, because they built the business by doing everything themselves. But once you grow, you cannot stay in every part of the day-to-day. You have to let other people take on responsibility.

AutoPulse Team: What does that require from a leader?

Brad: Trust, patience, and teaching. People are going to grow by taking on more. If the owner cannot step back, the business can only go so far.

AutoPulse Team: What habits become critical once you move beyond one location?

Brad: Leading from afar is critical since you can't be everywhere all the time. The second is consistently auditing and helping and teaching to hold a standard.

AutoPulse Team: What does that look like in practice?

Brad: It means you stay involved, but not by trying to be physically everywhere. You lead through the people in the business. You check standards, you coach, you help, and you keep teaching. If you do not do that, things drift.

BUILDING A SHOP WHERE TECHNICIANS CAN SEE A FUTURE

AutoPulse Team: The technician shortage continues to be a major issue across North America. What has worked for you in attracting, training, and retaining technicians?



Brad: We have to give them a career path. They have to know if they stay and grow they can build a career to provide for themselves and a future. As well, work should be enjoyable.

Maybe not fun per se, but you have to want to come to work. We talk about this a lot. All managers know they need their people to wake up and want to come. Come to win, come to learn, come to a challenge, and come to work with people they respect.

AutoPulse Team: The career path piece stands out because it gives people something concrete to work toward.

Brad: It does. People need to know there is a future for them here. If they stay, improve, and put in the work, there has to be a path. That matters.

AutoPulse Team: You also mentioned that people need to want to come to work. That is a simple phrase, but it says a lot.

Brad: It does. Work should be a place where people feel challenged in a good way, where they can learn, where they can contribute, and where they respect the people around them. That does not happen by accident. Managers have to help create that environment.

AutoPulse Team: How do you build a culture where technicians want to stay?

Brad: It all comes back to respect. Everyone needs to be heard, know they are human and not a number, and every leader must show they care.

The leader gives everyone a reason to show up. Show up for goals, each other, the team success, and their passion.

AutoPulse Team: Respect is one of those words that can sound broad until you see how much depends on it.

Brad: Yes. People know very quickly whether they are respected or not. They know if they are being heard. They know if leadership cares. That affects whether they stay, whether they improve, and how they show up each day.

THE SERVICE ADVISOR'S JOB IS TO BUILD UNDERSTANDING

AutoPulse Team: In many service businesses, the service advisor sits right between the operation and the customer. What defines a great service advisor today?

Brad: They have to communicate. Every service advisor builds a presentation. They can't just be about a sale or whether you want it. They need to show a customer what's functioning and maintained, what's broken or wearing out, and what does the next year look like with this vehicle.

AutoPulse Team: So the conversation has to be broader than just quoting a repair.

Brad: Yes. The customer should understand the condition of the vehicle, what is working, what needs attention, and what could be coming next. That is a much better conversation than just asking whether they want to buy something.

AutoPulse Team: That probably changes the nature of trust.

Brad: It does. Customers respond better when they feel informed. They want clarity. They want to understand what is happening with the vehicle and what their options are.



AutoPulse Team: How do you develop advisors who can communicate that way rather than just sell repairs?

Brad: This is all about hiring. You have to hire for culture and team fit. Sales skills and automotive knowledge can all be taught. You need to find and only hire people that will fit the culture and take care of the customer. Secondly, we talk about treating our teams well so they feel empowered to treat the customer well.

AutoPulse Team: So the foundation is hiring the right person first.

Brad: Yes. Skills can be taught. Knowledge can be taught. But culture fit matters. You need people who will take care of the customer the right way.

AutoPulse Team: And then how they are treated internally shapes how they treat customers.

Brad: Absolutely. If people feel respected and supported, it affects how they show up for the customer. That connection is very real.

LOCAL TRUST STILL MATTERS

AutoPulse Team: Independent repair shops rely heavily on community trust. What practices have helped Scott's U-Save build long-term loyalty in its local markets?

Brad: We do a lot with our communities; donation, charity, fundraisers, sponsorships, and being active. People know when they spend money at Scott's they are putting that money back into their community.

AutoPulse Team: That creates a different kind of relationship than a purely transactional one.

Brad: Yes. People notice whether a business is active in the community or not. We believe it matters to be involved. When customers know that the business is supporting the community around them, that means something.

AutoPulse Team: It also seems aligned with the broader way you talk about the business. Not just service, but responsibility.

Brad: I think that is fair. Being part of the community matters. People want to support businesses that are present and involved.

WHAT THE NEXT GENERATION SERVICE CENTER WILL DEMAND

AutoPulse Team: If you look ahead, what technologies or operational changes do you think will define the next generation of service centers?

Brad: In the coming years it will be critical to have the proper diagnostic equipment, trained techs to use this equipment, and having access to the vehicle data. There is a lot of investment in gaining this access and having credentials to access the vehicle networks.

AutoPulse Team: The future is clearly getting more technical.

Brad: Yes. Shops will need the right equipment, the right training, and access to the data and networks needed to work on modern vehicles. That is already becoming more important, and it is only going to continue.

AutoPulse Team: Vehicle technology is changing, but so is customer behaviour.

How do you see customer expectations affecting the business over the next decade?



Brad: They already have. People want things fast and easy. This starts with an easy booking process; typically online. Consumers also prefer texts and emails over long phone calls. So many want a report texted or emailed so they can review on their phone.

Most consumers want to interact with a business via their phone. Those that embrace hospitality and the customer experience will thrive.

AutoPulse Team: That is a clear shift in how customers want to engage.

Brad: Yes. People want convenience. They want to book easily, communicate by text or email, and review things on their phone. That is what many customers expect now.

AutoPulse Team: And that does not replace customer experience. It becomes part of it.

Brad: Exactly. Convenience matters, but so does hospitality. The businesses that combine both will be in a strong position.

GROWTH TAKES TIME

AutoPulse Team: For independent shop owners who want to build multi-location service businesses, what lessons from your own journey would you share?

Brad: It takes time. You never grow as fast as you had hoped or wanted. Plus nothing grows straight up. You have setbacks, down quarters, slow periods, people that leave who helped you get to where you are, and challenges just make you stronger.

AutoPulse Team: That is a very grounded view of growth.

Brad: It is just the reality of it. Growth takes time. It is not a straight line. There are setbacks, slower periods, and challenges along the way. You have to keep building through that.

AutoPulse Team: What helps leaders stay steady through those periods?

Brad: Perspective. Patience. And continuing to work on the business the right way. Challenges are part of it. You learn from them and keep moving.

AutoPulse Team: When you look at the business today, what still matters most to you?

Brad: The people, the customer, and continuing to grow the business the right way.

AutoPulse Team: Brad, thank you.

Brad: Thank you.



THE POWER OF PARTS MARGIN/ MARK-UP FOR INDEPENDENT AUTO REPAIR SHOPS

MOST SHOPS ARE LEAVING TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS ON THE TABLE



CECIL BULLARD

Founder & Chairman
of the Board,
The Institute

“

Cecil Bullard is the Founder and CEO of The Institute for Automotive Business Excellence and a respected voice in the independent auto repair industry. A third-generation technician and former shop owner, he has spent decades helping automotive service businesses improve leadership, financial performance, customer communication, and long-term profitability.

”

In the dynamic landscape of independent auto repair shops, every decision counts towards the profits, sustainability, and growth of the business.

Over the years, I've witnessed firsthand the challenges and opportunities that come with running a repair shop, and I've dedicated myself to helping shop owners unlock their full profit potential through strategic parts markup as part of a strategic plan.

In this comprehensive guide, I'll take you through my journey, share insights on parts markup, and explore the transformative impact it can have on the automotive service and repair business.

A PASSION FOR THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY:

My journey in the automotive industry began at a young age, working alongside my family in our repair business. From learning the ins and outs of maintaining and servicing a variety of vehicles to managing the day-to-day operations of the shop, I developed a deep appreciation for the complexities of the automotive industry.

As I transitioned from a technician to a service advisor, and later a manager, owner, and leader, I realized the critical role that parts markup plays in shaping the financial health of a repair business, which can contribute 30% to 50% of your gross profit.

Get this: from a survey of 618 auto repair shops, 67% of them are not maximizing their profit potential due to inadequate markup practices on parts, which is costing auto businesses between \$40,000 and \$70,000+ annually – a major hit to their top and bottom line.

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Parts Markup Matrix – What is it?

A parts markup matrix is a strategy-based formula for pricing parts. It guides the markup on purchased parts to ensure a healthy profit margin on every repair order. It typically applies higher markups on lower-cost parts and lower markups on higher-cost parts to achieve a targeted overall margin.

UNDERSTANDING THE PARTS MARKUP PUZZLE:

For me, parts markup is more than just setting prices – it's about striking the perfect balance between profitability and customer satisfaction. Parts markup and the need for repair shop owners to adopt a strategic approach to pricing is important to running a financially successful business. By understanding costs, market dynamics, and customer perceptions, shop owners can ensure a reasonable profit margin while remaining competitive in the market.

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AutoPulse Highlights

Community Inspired by Success

Why a Parts Matrix is a Must-Have?

Implementing a customized parts markup matrix is essential for profit, as standard list prices or flat markups won't achieve healthy margins. This strategy ensures prices align with your services, protecting margins and enhancing profitability.

CRACKING THE CODE: PRACTICAL MARKUP STRATEGIES:

It is important that you understand both your profitability and costs to have a comprehensive pricing strategy. From setting realistic profit targets to developing structured pricing matrices, The Institute provides shop owners with the tools they need to maximize profitability and build value for their clients. Continuous monitoring and refinement of markup strategies are essential to staying agile and responsive to market trends.

Typically, a shop marks up parts in one of three ways:

1. Doubling Parts Price: What we see in shops with this strategy is a 42% to 44% parts margin. This strategy is limiting and will NEVER get you what you need financially. The reason why is that it is not feasible for larger components such as engines. Most shops have no problem doubling a \$4 oil filter to \$8 but is virtually impossible to sell a \$4,000 engine for \$8,000. And you can never earn 50% margin with large items at 20% to 30%.

2. Dealer Mark-up/Manufacturer's List: What we see in shops with this strategy is a 38% to 42% parts margin. The typical mark-up percentages applied by dealerships and/or manufacturers have nothing to do with your costs or the parts margins you need to be financially successful. These mark-ups usually fall within the range of 30%-40% parts margin where we aim for 58%.

3. Have and Manage a Parts Matrix (the best and only real option for successful shops): By adopting and adhering to a consistent, non-emotional parts matrix, repair shops can navigate the complex landscape of parts pricing with confidence and purpose.

If we are shooting for a 58% parts margin (55% minimum), the average repair shop doing \$650,000 in gross sales would see parts sales totaling near \$325,000 (@42% parts margin) creating a \$114,660 parts profit.

While a shop with a @58% parts margin would create a \$188,500 parts profit making a difference of \$73,840 in top-line revenue.

The most effective and reliable approach to parts pricing involves establishing and managing a structured pricing matrix or matrices.

By removing emotion from pricing decisions and considering factors such as supplier costs, desired profit margins, and market dynamics, repair shops can consistently achieve margins within the desired range.

This method ensures a balanced approach to pricing that optimizes profitability while maintaining competitiveness.

EXPLORING THE MECHANICS OF PARTS MARKUP:

Let's delve deeper into the mechanics of the parts matrix. The matrix is a structured framework that guides pricing decisions by considering key variables such as cost, desired profit margins, and market dynamics.

By understanding these variables shop owners can make informed pricing decisions that align with their business goals.

THE COST OF NEGLECTING MARKUP OPTIMIZATION:

Imagine a scenario where a repair shop consistently undercharges for parts in a bid to attract more customers. Initially, this strategy might seem like a win-win – customers are delighted by the seemingly affordable prices, and the shop enjoys a steady influx of business. However, beneath the surface lies a ticking time bomb.

By undercutting parts prices, the shop unknowingly sabotages its profit margins, limiting its ability to invest in crucial areas such as equipment upgrades, facilities, employees, and employee training.

Moreover, the perception of 'cheap' parts may tarnish the shop's reputation, eroding trust and deterring potential customers who equate low prices with inferior quality.

Benchmark Matrix by Part Cost

This is a sample matrix from The Institute for Automotive Business Excellence that you can use as a starting point to mark up your parts. Use the strategy guide below this matrix for tips to adjust it based on your unique shop.

Part Cost	Markup Multiplier	Approximate Profit %
\$0 to \$2.50	X 4.00	75.0% Profit
\$2.50 to \$5.00	X 3.75	73.3% Profit
\$5.01 to \$10.00	X 3.00	66.7% Profit
\$10.01 to \$50.00	X 2.75	63.6% Profit
\$50.01 to \$100.00	X 2.50	60.0% Profit
\$100.01 to \$150.00	X 2.20	54.5% Profit
\$150.01 and \$200.00	X 2.00	50.0% Profit
\$200.01 and 500.00	X 1.85	46.0% Profit
\$500.01 and Up	X 1.70	41.1% Profit

UNVEILING THE PROFIT POTENTIAL:

But fear not, for amidst the challenges lies a golden opportunity – the untapped potential of parts markup.

By adopting a strategic parts matrix, repair shops can unlock a treasure trove of hidden profits and secure their foothold in the competitive market.

Enter The Institute and Cecil Bullard, a seasoned veteran in the realm of auto business, who advocates for a paradigm shift in how shops perceive parts pricing.

According to Cecil, the key lies in embracing the concept of value over price – educating customers about the benefits of quality parts and positioning the shop as a trusted provider of reliable solutions.

Conclusion: A Roadmap to Success:

By embracing the principles of value-based pricing, continuous improvement, and customer-centricity, repair shop owners can chart a course toward sustainable growth and prosperity.

With the right mindset and strategies in place, repair businesses can unlock their full profit potential and thrive in an increasingly competitive market.

My story is not just about parts markup – it's about empowering repair shop owners to realise their full potential and succeed in an ever-evolving industry.

With dedication, determination, and the right guidance, repair businesses can overcome challenges and achieve lasting success in the dynamic world of independent auto repair.

Auto Pulse Highlights

Community supported by GaragePulse

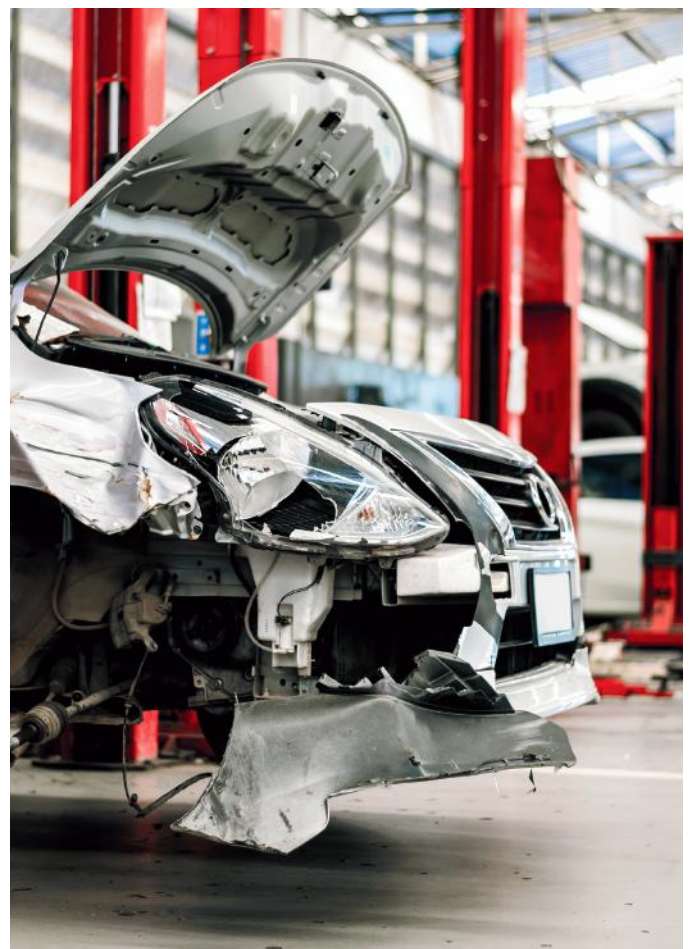


Important Tip: Leave Emotions Out of Parts Pricing

Don't let emotions or customer concerns over costs deter you from standing firm on your parts markup. Your shop adds high value to the parts through warranties, guarantees of fixed vehicle issues, proper fitment, and expert installation- justifying your worth.

Consider taking a sales class to identify your unique sales proposition (USP) and reasons for pricing higher than competitors or online stores.

Recognise the value you offer. Practice your USP to build value for your clients and present your prices confidently.





BRIDGING GENERATIONS: LEADERSHIP AND TRANSFORMATION AT MOTOCARE

A DYNAMIC CONVERSATION WITH KHALID BUGSHAN AND ABDULKADER ON
GROWTH, INNOVATION, AND SHAPING THE AUTOMOTIVE FUTURE.



KHALID BUGSHAN

General Manager –
Motocare, Anfal



ABDULKADER ADAM

Senior Strategy Director –
Motocare



PERSONAL GROWTH & LEADERSHIP

AutoPulse team for Khalid: You've achieved a leadership position at just 24. What's been the most significant learning curve for you in leading Motocare?

Khalid: The biggest learning curve for me has been understanding that leadership has nothing to do with age but it has everything to do with ownership.

When I joined Motocare, I came in with a VERY strong sense of responsibility, but the real test was earning the trust of teams who have been in this industry longer than I've been alive.

I realised early that I had to listen before I lead. I had to make firm decisions even when others didn't agree, and be fully transparent about where we're heading.

And over time, I learned something important: when people see your consistency, your commitment, and your fairness, they don't look at your age, they look at your leadership.

Over 14 months, this helped me completely transform Motocare. We pulled down from 44 branches to 11 whilst increasing total sales by almost 12%. Transformed from leaking Cash to Profit. With a dedicated team which was ready to innovate and learn new ways to run the business.

For Abdulkader: You've worked with leaders at different stages of their careers. What stands out about working with someone as young as Khalid?

Abdulkader: For me, the refreshing part is his willingness to listen and then act decisively. I have worked with leaders who had decades of experience but still struggled with this.

With Khalid, you give him the data, the reality, the pros and cons and sometimes a little tough love... and he turns it into execution.

I honestly struggle to keep up as he is almost half my age and so full of energy and full of a get-it-done-now attitude.

But truly, his maturity, ownership, and humility make him one of the easiest young leaders to work with and hands down the most promising I've worked with.

AutoPulse Team: Both of you come from different professional experiences. How do these differences help in shaping Motocare's vision?

Khalid: I focus on leadership, direction, culture, and ensuring Motocare aligns with the wider Bugshan group and tyre ecosystem, and Abdulkader brings the strategic depth, the financial discipline (everything is budgeted), and the operational analytics and diagnostics.

AK: Khalid is the steering wheel and he sets the direction.

Im the engine, I make sure we reach there... without overheating, but sometimes I get overheated myself!

And together, we have become a finely tuned car. He chooses the destination, I plot the route, he accelerates, I steer.





LESSONS FROM MOTOCARE'S JOURNEY

AutoPulse team: Motocare has gone through a major transformation recently. What triggered this change?

Khalid: When I stepped in, we were at a crossroads. Many branches were underperforming as part of an unplanned expansion. We needed new systems, higher service standards, and a culture shift from reactive to proactive operations.

Working with Abdulkader, we took everything apart everything, processes, pricing, staffing, P&L, KPIs, and rebuilt the Motocare branch by branch.

AK: Motocare didn't need a facelift; it needed a full engine rebuild. We went into SAP, into stock rooms, into technician skill mapping and training, Head office full overhaul and realignment.

And slowly, we turned loss-making branches around. Palestine, Malaz, Rabea, Hail one by one.

AutoPulse team: What does the transformation journey at Motocare teach us about the challenges and opportunities in the MENA region's automotive industry?

Khalid: Motocare's transformation showed me that the MENA automotive sector rewards those who adapt fast we are still at the tip of the iceberg..

By fixing systems, improving standards, and focusing on customers, we turned challenges into real growth opportunities.

AutoPulse team: How do you ensure that Motocare adapts to changes in customer expectations while staying grounded in its core values?

Ak: Khalid is right, the region is full of opportunity. Our transformation taught us that you survive by being adaptable, and you win by being consistent.

We dealt with legacy systems, supply-chain surprises, and customer habits that change faster than tyre prices, but once you build capability, discipline, and a culture that actually delivers on its promises, then doors open!

AutoPulse team: Can you share an example of a tough decision you had to make recently and what the outcome taught you?

Khalid: There are difficult decisions every day, but the toughest have been letting go of good people who simply couldn't adapt to the new transformation — whether in head office or on the workshop floor. And closing branches I personally built, especially detailing centres, was not easy either.

What I've learned is that the moment you realise a person or a branch is holding back the transformation, you must act immediately.

Delays only make the decision harder and slow down the entire organisation.

Leadership means protecting the future, even when the present feels uncomfortable

Ak: A team member who refuses to adapt is like a tyre with a slow leak — ignore it long enough and it'll leave you stranded at the worst time. Took some time for us to get the car moving, but So what I push for is simple: diagnose early, act early.... Oh, I should send that to the team to use as a marketing idea!!



AutoPulse team: What does leadership mean to each of you?

Khalid: Leadership isn't about authority, it's about accountability. People follow clarity, consistency, and character. I'm young, yes, but I don't shy away from tough decisions. From closing branches to restructuring, to retraining teams. Ownership builds respect.

AK: For me, leadership is simple: You don't manage people, you enable them.

AutoPulse Team: What's next for the company?

Khalid: whilst Motocare gets ready for the relaunch in 2026. I have also been designated as Anfal Shared Services. We will be rebuilding Anfal Shared Services, unifying HR, Finance, SAP, IT, and Audit to support all Bugshan Group companies like a powerhouse and in the process, Motocare will have a strong backend to support the new branches in the pipeline for 2026.

INDUSTRY TRENDS & CHALLENGES

AutoPulse team: The automotive aftermarket in the MENA region is evolving rapidly. What trends do you think are shaping its future?

Khalid: The automotive aftermarket here is changing fast, and a few things are shaping the future. Customers now want things to be clear, quick, and professional — no surprises, no old-school service.

Technology is taking over... from online bookings to better diagnostics and smarter ways of working.

EVs and modern cars are pushing all of us to upgrade our skills and tools.

For us at Motocare, it's simple: keep up with customers, keep up with technology, and stay ahead of the change.

AutoPulse team: How do you both see technology, like AI or digitisation, influencing businesses like Motocare?

Khalid: Technology and AI help us run smarter — from faster diagnostics to clearer decisions and more consistent service.

What I value most are the insights I get; I spend hours on SAC analytics and Power BI reviewing every service, product change, and comparison to steer Motocare in the right direction

AK: AI and digital tools are like having a master technician who never sleeps; they catch things before humans even hear the rattle. And honestly, with the amount of data we get now at Motocare and the charting we have done, I tell the team: if you still make a blind decision, you're driving with the lights off at midnight.

AutoPulse team: What's one challenge you believe is under-discussed in the industry, and how should companies prepare for it?

AK: One challenge nobody talks about enough is the people gap. Everyone's busy discussing technology, EVs, and systems but not enough people are talking about the shrinking pool of skilled technicians, especially in KSA.

You can buy the newest tools, the fastest scanners, and the best lifts... but if your team can't shift into the next gear, the whole workshop stalls.

Companies need to invest heavily in training, real career paths, and upskilling and even more on ways to retain these Technicians from leaving to better offers.



KNOWLEDGE & INSIGHTS

AutoPulse Team: What role does collaboration play in overcoming industry challenges, and how can different players in the ecosystem work better together?

AK: Collaboration is the only way to survive in this industry. No one can fix the market alone. This isn't a one-man rebuild. Distributors, workshops, suppliers, and even competitors need to talk more, share more, and stop acting like everyone's guarding a secret formula for brake pads.

The system works better with Alignment: We were invited by Kenya AutoExpress as a collective visit with Bridgestone in February and it helped us cut over a year in our plan strategic plan. We did the same on our visit to Autopro and invite anyone who would like to witness our journey and we are open to share.

At the end of the day, we're all in the same circuit, and if the whole industry doesn't coordinate, we're just a bunch of cars trying to merge with no indicators.

AutoPulse Team: If you had to give a masterclass to MENA-based businesses, what topic would you each choose, and why?

Khalid: I would teach a masterclass on Cash Discipline, which I learned after joining Motocare as GM. managing expenses, paying salaries on time, and keeping teams motivated.

People think I don't worry about money... trust me, even if your family name is Bugshan, a branch that loses cash will get you thinking!

I'd teach a masterclass called Revamp the Engine, Don't Just Change the Oil.

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ADVICE FOR FUTURE LEADERS & BUSINESSES

AutoPulse team to Khalid: Many young people dream of leadership roles but feel they lack experience. What advice would you give them to take the first step?

Khalid: My advice is simple: don't wait to 'feel ready.' You grow into leadership by taking responsibility and building a team that can guide you best. You don't need to know everything.

Listen more than you speak, be consistent in your actions, and show people they can rely on you!

AutoPulse team to Abdulkader: You've seen businesses navigate transformations. What's the biggest mistake companies make during this process, and how can they avoid it?

AK: The biggest mistake companies make is trying to do a transformation with half the things unchanged. They upgrade the systems, repaint the branches, buy new tools... but they leave the same old behaviours untouched and then fall back into the same gears.

To avoid this, you need to, fix the culture, fix the accountability, and fix the mindset first. Because in business, just like in a car, if the engine has issues, Nano ceramic coating won't help it run better.

AutoPulse team: Both of you work closely on Motocare's strategy. What's one thing every company should focus on to stay relevant in the next decade?

Khalid: In the next few years, companies need to stay close to the customer, but just as importantly, they need to stay close to their numbers. At the end of the day, we have salaries to pay, branches to run, and a team that depends on us. If you can't pay on time, nothing else matters. In our Industry Tires don't make money... Focus on services.

AK: Exactly! While you're counting customers, count your costs, gross profit, and expenses. If a project isn't making money, don't do it. Simple. We're running Motocare, not a neighbourhood support garage.

Khalid: For me, it's about balance. Take care of your people, take care of your customers, and take care of your cash flow. When your team is paid on time and working with peace of mind, your service naturally improves. Happy staff is the best strategy most companies ignore.

AK: And let me add the final piece: don't launch every shiny idea that shows up. Some companies treat strategy like a buffet (excuse my food reference, I also do restaurant reviews in my free time). Choose what makes sense, choose what makes money. Most business copycat thinking that the competitors are making money. MOST times, competitors are trying something new without having thought it through and will burn cash like fuel in a V12.





AutoPulse team: If you had to give a masterclass to MENA-based businesses, what topic would you each choose, and why?

Khalid: I would teach a masterclass on Cash Discipline, which I learned after joining Motocare as GM. managing expenses, paying salaries on time, and keeping teams motivated.

People think I don't worry about money...trust me, even if your family name is Bugshan, a branch that loses cash will get you thinking!

I'd teach a masterclass called Revamp the Engine, Don't Just Change the Oil.

Because in the MENA aftermarket with shifting customer demands, supply-chain surprises, and evolving vehicle tech, success doesn't come from one-time fixes, but from building a robust system and a team that can shift gears when market roads get bumpy and who better to teach it but me, with my 25 years of problem fixing in almost every automotive aftermarket industry. (yet to try car sales)

AutoPulse team: How do cultural values in the MENA region influence leadership and business strategy?

Khalid: Leadership in this region runs on relationships and trust.

You can have the best systems in the world, but if you don't treat people with respect and create a trust connection, nothing moves.

AK: ..And let me add in the MENA region, loyalty is earned, not demanded.

If you show your customers and team stability, honesty, and a bit of humanity, they'll stick with you even when the road feels like an off-road track."

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

AutoPulse team: What's one thing you've learned from each other that has changed the way you approach work or leadership?

Khalid: I have learnt A lot from Abdulkader, it would be impossible to put them down. Like a masterclass in Business school. But most importantly. Nothing is IMPOSSIBLE, Just Look at the Facts, collect the data, visualise it and take the data-driven decisions. Put up a roadmap, make a plan and hit the Finish line; never let a hurdle put you down. Re-strategise and realign the plan to your Finishline..... Did I mention..... Stick to the Budget.

AK: From Khalid, I learned a lesson I never expected at this stage of my career. His execution speed is something else; you barely finish explaining the problem, and he is already lining up the actions, solutions, people and half the follow-up.

He pushed me to rethink how I use my own time. I realised I need to focus on the things only I can do, which are the heavy diagnostics, the strategy, and the tough calls. Train and delegate the rest to the right people.

In simple words, he taught me to stop trying to be the whole workshop... and start acting like the master technician who guides the team instead of doing every oil change himself.

AutoPulse team: If you could make one change in the MENA automotive industry today, what would it be and why?

Khalid: If I could change one thing, it would be raising the standard of service across the industry. Customers in the MENA region deserve consistency, clear pricing, professional workshops, and reliable experiences.



If everyone committed to higher standards, the entire region would grow faster and earn far more trust.

Ak: If I could change one thing, I'd turn managers into real leaders. Too many in our industry focus on paperwork, checklists, check-ins, clock-outs, and control, not on guiding teams or driving improvement.

Right now, we need people who can inspire, take ownership, and actually lead change, not just monitor it, and I have one right here with me. (Khalid)

If we build more leaders, the whole industry will shift into a higher gear instantly.



AutoPulse team: What final piece of advice would you give to businesses in the MENA region as they prepare for the next decade?

Khalid: Focus on your Basics: take care of your people, manage your cash carefully, and deliver consistently to your customers.

If you protect your team and stay financially disciplined, you will stay strong no matter how much the industry changes.

Ak: My advice? Stop treating transformation like a quick service. Do the full inspection: fix your systems, update your skills, and align your teams.

Because in this region, where Family businesses have the cash and are ready to put it in the business, only the companies with strong engines under the hood will still be on the road in 2035. Gosh, I will be 55! Insha Allah still running smoothly in the Industry.





FROM FRAGMENTATION TO TRUST:

KATHLEEN LONG ON FIXING THE REAL GAPS IN AUTO SERVICE



KATHLEEN LONG



VP, Business Operations
& Strategy



Yelp/ RepairPal
*(a wholly owned subsidiary
of Yelp, Inc)*

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Kathleen Long is a growth and go-to-market leader in automotive, known for building strong teams across revenue operations, marketing, customer success, and partnerships.

As Chief Revenue Officer at RepairPal (now a wholly owned subsidiary of Yelp), she has been a visible voice in fixed ops, ethical leadership, women in automotive, and customer-focused business growth.

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AutoPulse Host: Kathleen, your journey into the auto service industry wasn't conventional. You didn't grow up planning for this space. What really brought you here- and more importantly, what made you stay?

Kathleen: It definitely wasn't planned.

I grew up around it in some sense-my dad was an auto mechanic when I was younger-but I never saw myself in this industry. I wasn't mechanically inclined, and I didn't really understand the depth or breadth of what automotive could offer to a growing professional like me.

Just before joining the automotive industry, I was working in financial technology. I had just exited my previous company and was evaluating what to do next. That's when a recruiter reached out about an opportunity at RepairPal. They were looking for someone who understood customer success, operations, and data integrations-areas in which I had experience.

That intersection is what pulled me in.

And what made me stay is realising how much opportunity exists here. Even after more than a decade, it still feels like we're only scratching the surface of what's possible in improving how this industry operates and serves customers.



AutoPulse Host: You've had a front-row view of the industry for years now. If you strip away the obvious, where do most auto service businesses quietly lose revenue without even realising it?

Kathleen: The most common and least acknowledged leak is at the very beginning, customer conversion.

Many independent repair shops are simply not set up to convert new customers effectively. They don't have the tools, the processes, or sometimes even the staffing focus to manage that first interaction well.

And this sits on top of a deeper issue: trust. Consumers already come into auto repair with scepticism. There's a baseline lack of trust in the industry, and that makes conversion even harder. Now layer on top of that the fact that repairs have become significantly more expensive, and people are more hesitant than ever to commit.

There's also a structural issue. Most businesses are running multiple disconnected systems-shop management, CRM, communication tools-and none of them fully talk to each other. That fragmentation creates gaps. Missed follow-ups, inconsistent communication, lost context.

So while businesses think they're losing revenue in obvious places like pricing or upsells, a lot of it is actually lost in the gaps between systems and processes, and how humans interact with those tools and their customers.

AutoPulse Host: That fragmentation point is interesting. Operators often feel busy, even overwhelmed. But being busy doesn't necessarily mean being effective. In your view, what separates a busy workshop from a truly scalable, high-performing operation?

Kathleen: The difference is whether success is repeatable.



A busy shop can still be dependent on effort from individuals going above and beyond, solving problems in the moment, pushing things through. That kind of operation works, but it doesn't scale.

A high-performing business has clarity.

It has the right people in the right roles, supported by systems that allow them to perform consistently. Outcomes are predictable. If something works, you can explain why it worked. And more importantly, you can replicate it.

That's what creates a playbook of sustainable repeatable processes.

Once an owner has that level of clarity, scaling becomes a strategic decision, not a risky leap. Opening a second or third location is no longer guesswork-it's execution.

But getting there requires intentionality. You have to step back and understand what's actually driving your success, not just stay busy reacting to daily operations. Sometimes when I am coaching people, I talk about doing less. This is really what I mean when I say that.

AutoPulse Host: Let's talk about trust. It's often said that fixing the car right is enough. But in reality, that's just the baseline. What actually builds long-term trust with customers?

Kathleen: Fixing the car correctly is expected. It doesn't differentiate you.

Trust is built through a combination of factors that go beyond the repair itself.

First, validation. Customers want to know that what they're being told is fair. Third-party validation plays a role here, something that reassures them that pricing and recommendations are aligned with reality.

Second, transparency. Clear communication about what's happening, why it's needed, and what it will cost. This is also the place where shops can discuss repair plans for customers who don't want or can't afford to do it all at once. Third, consistency in how you treat customers. Genuine care shows up in small moments-how conversations are handled, how questions are answered, how concerns are addressed, and how proactive the ongoing conversation is. And then there's memory.

Customers shouldn't feel like they're starting from scratch every time they interact with you. Systems that retain history, preferences, and previous interactions-that continuity builds comfort and confidence.

Finally, ongoing dialogue. Trust isn't built in a single transaction. It's built over time through repeated, consistent interactions.

When all of that comes together, the relationship becomes stronger than just a service exchange.

AutoPulse Host: Despite delivering good service, many repair shops still struggle with repeat customers. Why does that gap exist?

Kathleen: There's a fundamental economic tension happening right now.

Over the last five years, repair costs have increased significantly-around 85%. That has a direct impact on how customers perceive value. At the same time, most people don't want to spend money on car repairs. It's not a discretionary purchase-it's something they deal with when they have to.

So you have a customer who already doesn't trust the process, is having a bad day because something went wrong with their vehicle, and is now facing a much higher bill than they expected.

That combination makes retention difficult.



Even if the service was good, the overall experience might still feel negative from the customer's perspective.

On top of that, many customers are delaying repairs altogether due to affordability concerns. So the natural cadence of repeat visits is disrupted. It's not just a service problem-it's an emotional and economic problem combined.

AutoPulse Host: If you had to simplify everything and fix just one process inside an automotive repair shop-something that could immediately improve both revenue and customer experience-what would it be?

Kathleen: Customer communication. Almost every issue we've discussed ties back to communication in some way.

How you handle the first inquiry.
How you explain the problem.
How you discuss pricing.
How you follow up.

Clear, consistent, and thoughtful communication can solve a surprising number of problems. It reduces misunderstandings, builds trust, improves conversion, and increases retention. In many ways, it's the highest-leverage area that's often underdeveloped.

AutoPulse Host: Let's shift to scale. If a five-location business wants to grow into a twenty-location network, what do they need to get right early?



Kathleen: They need clarity on identity. Before scaling, a business must understand who it is and who it serves.

What kind of customer are you built for?
What do those customers expect?
What does your brand actually stand for in their minds?

Once that's clear, everything else becomes aligned.

Hiring decisions, tools, processes, facility investments- all of it should reinforce that core identity.

Without that clarity, scaling creates confusion. Each location starts drifting in a different direction, and service delivery becomes dependent on the humans in a business in a way that can fail on a tough day.

Leadership also plays a critical role here. Today, more than ever, leadership requires deep immersion in customer needs. Decisions can't be made in isolation- they have to be grounded in a real understanding of the market.

If customer experience becomes the central driver, it naturally shapes the rest of the business in the right direction. That's what allows scale without fragmentation.

AutoPulse Host: When you step back and look at the industry as a whole, what do you think operators still underestimate the most?

Kathleen: They underestimate how interconnected everything is.

Revenue, customer experience, trust, operations-they're often treated as separate problems. In reality, they're deeply linked.



A gap in communication affects trust.
A lack of trust affects conversion.
Poor conversion impacts revenue.

Fragmented systems make it all of it harder to manage.

You can't fix one area in isolation and expect the business to transform.

The operators who start seeing the system as a whole and begin addressing it with that mindset are the ones who move ahead.

AutoPulse Host: There's a level of systems thinking in what you're describing-seeing the business as an integrated whole rather than a set of parts.

Kathleen: Exactly.

And that's where the next phase of the industry is heading. It's not just about being a good technician or even a good operator. It's about understanding how all the pieces connect-and designing the business intentionally.

That's where real progress happens.

AutoPulse Host: Clear, structured thinking grounded in real operational insight-that's rare. Thanks for breaking this down, Kathleen.

Kathleen:

Thank you. This was a great conversation!





BUILDING WITH FAITH, SCALING WITH DISCIPLINE:



HERNAN ON REDEFINING AUTO SERVICE AT PRESTIGE AUTO TECH



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HERNAN CORNEJO



CEO,



Prestige Auto Tech



Florida

Hernan Cornejo is the CEO of Prestige Auto Tech, bringing hands-on leadership experience from Miami's automotive service industry. With a strong focus on customer satisfaction, community service, and business excellence, Hernan represents the owner-operator mindset driving independent auto repair businesses forward in a competitive market.

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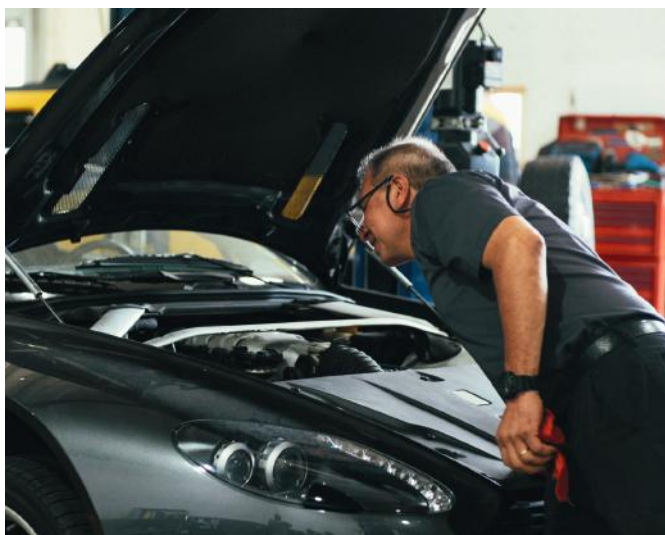
ADVICE FOR FUTURE LEADERS & BUSINESSES

AutoPulse Host: Hernan, let's start at the root. A lot of operators talk about growth, numbers, and scale. But your story seems to begin somewhere deeper. What really set this journey in motion?

Hernan: For me, it was never just about cars. The passion for cars was always there—I've always enjoyed working with them, understanding systems, solving problems. But what truly shaped this journey is my faith.

I believe everything we have is by God's grace. That perspective changes how you approach business. You stop thinking of it purely as something you own, and you start seeing it as something you're entrusted with. That responsibility shifts your mindset—from chasing outcomes to focusing on how you operate every day.

Prestige Auto Tech was built from that place. Not just to run a successful business, but to serve people well, to operate with integrity, and to create something meaningful for everyone involved—customers, team members, and the community.



AutoPulse Host:

That's a very different starting point compared to most. When you look at the business today, what has that foundation translated into operationally?

Hernan: It shows up in consistency and intent. Today, we operate five service outlets across South Florida. Our primary focus is on European and luxury vehicles, which come with a certain level of expectation—from both a technical and customer experience standpoint.

We handle mechanical repairs, diagnostics, and extended warranties. But what matters more is how we deliver those services.

At every location, we maintain a consistent standard. That's non-negotiable. But at the same time, we're very aware that each location serves a slightly different customer base. So we adapt where needed—communication style, service approach, even how we structure certain offerings.

Operationally, we've leaned heavily on modern systems—shop management platforms and CRM tools. Without that layer, you can't scale in a controlled way. You end up reacting instead of managing.

But tools alone don't create consistency. People do. Systems support the team, but the team defines the experience.

AutoPulse Host: You've scaled to five locations, which is where many businesses start feeling the pressure. What were the real challenges that surfaced as you grew?

Hernan: The biggest one is losing proximity. When you're running a single shop, you're close to everything—customers, technicians, processes. You can see problems early, fix them quickly, and maintain quality almost instinctively.



As you grow, that distance increases. You're no longer in every interaction. That's where most businesses start to lose their edge—not because they don't care, but because they don't have the structure to maintain what made them successful in the first place.

So the challenge becomes: how do you scale without diluting what got you here?
The second challenge is people.

Finding skilled technicians is already difficult. But finding people who also align with your values—that's where it gets even harder. You can train skills over time, but mindset is much harder to shape.

And then there's the internal balance. Standardization versus flexibility. You need systems to scale, but you can't make the business feel robotic. Customers still expect a human experience. That tension is constant.

AutoPulse Host: Most operators either over-standardize or stay too loose. How do you personally approach that balance?

Hernan: You define what cannot change, and you allow everything else to adapt.

For us, the non-negotiables are clear—quality of work, honesty in communication, and overall customer experience. Those don't change across locations.

But how those principles are delivered can vary. Different markets respond differently. A customer in one area may value speed more, while another may prioritise detailed explanations. If you try to force a single rigid model everywhere, you'll lose connection with the customer. At the same time, if you leave everything open, you lose control.

So the role of leadership is to set the foundation clearly and then trust the team to execute within that framework.

AutoPulse Host: That brings us to your role today. With multiple locations running, where does your attention go now?

Hernan: My focus has shifted significantly. At this stage, I'm not involved in day-to-day operations the way I used to be. My role is more about direction than execution. There are three areas I spend most of my time on.

First is expansion. We have a clear plan to grow beyond five locations, but expansion for us is not just about adding more shops. It's about ensuring every new location strengthens the brand, not weakens it.

Second is team development. This is probably the most critical piece. If you don't build leaders within your organisation, growth will always hit a ceiling. I'm focused on identifying people who can take ownership, grow into leadership roles, and carry the culture forward.

Third is customer experience. Even as we scale, this remains the core. Everything we do eventually ties back to how the customer feels when they interact with us.





AutoPulse Host: You've emphasised customer experience multiple times. In a market where pricing often dominates, how do you maintain that focus?

Hernan: Because not every customer is looking for the cheapest option.

There's a segment that prioritises price above everything else. That's not who we're trying to serve.

We focus on customers who value reliability, transparency, and convenience. When you consistently deliver those, pricing becomes less of a deciding factor.

Customer experience is often misunderstood. It's not about being overly friendly or adding superficial touches. It's about removing friction.

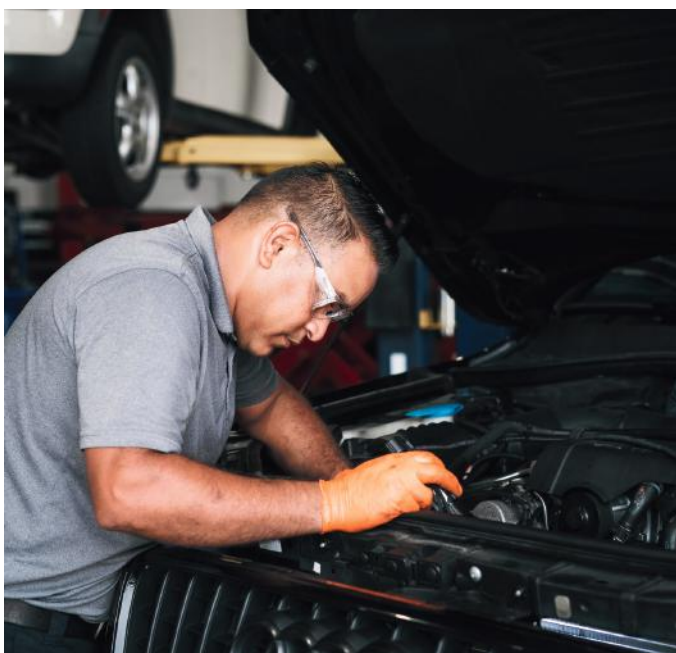
Can the customer trust you?

Do they understand what's happening with their vehicle?

Are timelines accurate?

Is communication clear?

If you get those fundamentals right, you build long-term relationships. That's where real business stability comes from.



AutoPulse Host: Let's move into the next phase. When you talk about Prestige Auto Tech 2.0, what does that really mean?

Hernan: It means scaling with intention.

We've validated the model at our current size. Now the challenge is to grow without losing the identity that got us here.

A big part of that is people. We're not just hiring to fill roles—we're looking for individuals who see this as a career path. People who are passionate about what they do and want to grow with the organisation.

If you build a team like that, you're not constantly managing problems. You're building something that can sustain itself.

Prestige Auto Tech 2.0 is not just about more locations. It's about building a stronger organisation—one that can scale while maintaining the same standards and values.

AutoPulse Host: Where does innovation fit into this next phase?

Hernan: Innovation, for us, is centred around convenience.

If you look at most industries today, convenience has become a baseline expectation.

People are used to seamless experiences—whether it's ordering something online or booking a service.

Auto service hasn't fully caught up.

There's still a lot of friction—customers have to plan their day around dropping off their vehicle, waiting for updates, and arranging transportation. We're looking at how we can remove that friction.



AutoPulse Host: That shifts the business from being service-focused to experience-focused.

Hernan: Exactly.

The repair itself is expected. That's the baseline. What differentiates you is everything around it. How easy is it to book?

How smooth is the process?

How transparent is the communication?

How little does the customer have to think about it?

If you can solve for those, you're no longer competing on price or even just technical capability. You're competing on experience.

AutoPulse Host: Do you see the industry moving in that direction broadly?

Hernan:

It will, but not evenly.

There will always be operators who stick to traditional models. But the ones who adapt early—who understand that customer expectations have changed—will pull ahead.

The shift is already happening. Customers are comparing their auto service experience to other industries, not just other workshops.

That's the real change.



AutoPulse Host: When you reflect on the journey so far—from starting out to running multiple locations—what has stayed constant for you?

Hernan:

The intention behind it.

The scale has changed. The complexity has changed. But the reason we started hasn't.

It's still about serving people well. It's still about operating with integrity. It's still about being grateful for the opportunity to build something.

Growth can sometimes pull you away from that if you're not careful. It's easy to get caught up in numbers and expansion.

But if the foundation stays strong, everything else becomes more stable.

AutoPulse Host: And if you had to define success at this stage?

Hernan: Success is alignment.

Alignment between growth and values. Between systems and people. Between what we say we stand for and how we actually operate.

If we can continue to grow while maintaining that alignment, that's success.

Not just in terms of business, but in terms of impact.

AutoPulse Host: Clear thinking, grounded execution, and a long-term view—that's a rare combination.

Thanks for sharing this, Hernan.

Hernan:

Thank you. I appreciate the conversation.



BEYOND COST: KUMARESAN ON BUILDING SUPPLY CHAINS THAT POWER MODERN AUTO SERVICE



KUMARESAN SUBRAMANIAN

Group Procurement Manager,
Jaidah Group



Kumaresan S is Head of Procurement at Jaidah Group, Qatar, bringing over two decades of experience across procurement, operations, and business excellence.

With a strong automotive and enterprise background, he represents the leaders driving smarter sourcing, stronger supplier ecosystems, and operational discipline across modern automotive businesses.





AutoPulse Host: Kumaresan, your journey into automotive didn't begin on the service floor-it began in procurement and engineering. Walk through how that path evolved.

Kumaresan: My entry into the automotive industry was not through operations or workshops-it was through engineering and sourcing.

Early in my career, I was focused on the procurement of automotive components and engineering materials. That exposure gradually shifted my interest toward understanding how procurement decisions influence broader business outcomes.

Over the years, across manufacturing, construction, and automotive sectors, I moved into leadership roles managing procurement and supply chain functions. Working with major automotive distributors across the Gulf region, brands like Toyota, Lexus, BMW, Ferrari, and now within Jaidah Group representing Chevrolet, Hyundai, Genesis, and Isuzu, gave me a clear perspective.

Procurement is not just a support function. It directly shapes operational efficiency.

That realisation led me to focus on procurement leadership, not as purchasing, but as building supply ecosystems that support growth, service performance, and cost efficiency.

AutoPulse Host:
Most operators don't immediately connect procurement to workshop performance. From your lens, how does procurement strategy actually influence service operations?

Kumaresan: The impact is direct.

Service centers rely on availability-availability of parts, tools, consumables, and equipment. If procurement is reactive, the workshop suffers. Delays increase, turnaround times extend, and customer satisfaction drops.

A well-structured procurement strategy ensures that the right parts are available at the right time and at the right cost.

This comes down to three things-demand planning, supplier coordination, and inventory management.

If these are aligned, service operations become smoother. Vehicles move faster through the system. Technicians don't wait. Customers don't experience delays.

Procurement, in that sense, becomes a driver of service efficiency-not just a backend function.

AutoPulse Host: That sounds straightforward in theory, but the current environment is anything but stable. What are the biggest challenges procurement teams are dealing with today?

Kumaresan: The environment is highly volatile. Supply chain disruptions are still a major issue. Lead times from global suppliers have increased. Logistics costs have fluctuated significantly. Manufacturing capacities are inconsistent across regions.

At the same time, automotive technology is evolving rapidly. This adds another layer of complexity.

Procurement teams are not just sourcing traditional parts anymore. They are constantly evaluating new suppliers, new technologies, and new diagnostic tools.



And alongside that, there are fundamental concerns: authenticity of parts, reliability of suppliers, consistency of quality.\

So the challenge is not just sourcing-it's ensuring continuity, reliability, and adaptability in a constantly shifting environment

AutoPulse Host: In that environment, cost pressure is always present. How do you balance cost control without compromising reliability and quality?

Kumaresan:

Cost control cannot be isolated from performance.

The mistake many organisations make is focusing only on purchase price. That approach creates short-term savings but long-term inefficiencies.

We focus on Total Cost of Ownership.

This includes supplier capability, delivery performance, warranty support, and long-term reliability.

A cheaper part that causes delays, failures, or rework is not cost-effective.

So the balance comes from structured sourcing-framework agreements, supplier performance monitoring, and long-term partnerships.

When procurement decisions are made with a long-term perspective, cost efficiency and operational reliability align naturally.

AutoPulse Host: Let's go deeper into supplier relationships.

At scale, managing suppliers becomes complex. What systems and processes are critical to make this work?

Kumaresan: Two-layer systems and governance. On the systems side, ERP platforms like SAP or Oracle are essential. They integrate purchasing, inventory, and financial data, providing visibility across the supply chain.

But systems alone are not enough.

You need structured processes-supplier evaluation frameworks, performance scorecards, regular review mechanisms, and clear communication channels.

The goal is to move from transactional relationships to strategic partnerships.

When suppliers are treated as partners, they become more aligned with your objectives-whether it's cost optimization, service levels, or innovation. That alignment is critical at scale.

AutoPulse Host: What are the key priorities shaping procurement strategies today across automotive groups?

Kumaresan: There are five clear priorities.

Supply chain resilience-ensuring continuity despite disruptions.

Digital procurement systems-creating visibility and efficiency.

Supplier diversification-reducing dependency on limited sources. Cost optimisation-without compromising performance.

Sustainability is becoming increasingly relevant across global supply chains. There is also a shift toward centralised procurement governance, aligning decisions across the organisation rather than operating in silos. And importantly, stronger collaboration between procurement, operations, and finance.

Procurement can no longer operate independently. It has to be integrated into the core business strategy.



AutoPulse Host:

Let's connect this to the service center. In the context of Auto Service 2.0, how does procurement need to evolve?

Kumaresan: The starting point is forecasting. Accurate parts forecasting changes everything. Using historical service data and predictive analytics, procurement teams can anticipate demand more effectively. This reduces stockouts, minimises excess inventory, and improves service throughput.

The second shift is supplier coordination. Faster replenishment cycles, better communication, and aligned planning reduce downtime in workshops.

The result is a direct improvement in customer experience, shorter waiting times, and faster service completion.

So procurement becomes an enabler of speed and reliability in modern service centres.



AutoPulse Host:

What changes are required in procurement models to support this speed?

Kumaresan: Procurement models need to become more integrated and data-driven. This includes framework supply agreements that ensure continuity.

Vendor-managed inventory models that reduce operational burden.

Digital procurement platforms that enable faster ordering and real-time visibility. The objective is to reduce friction.

Traditional procurement cycles are too slow for modern service operations. The model needs to shift toward responsiveness and real-time decision-making.

AutoPulse Host: How do you see supplier relationships evolving in this next phase?

Kumaresan: They will become more collaborative.

The future is not about negotiating price—it's about building alignment.

Suppliers will need to be integrated into planning processes, technology adoption, and inventory strategies.

Transparency will become critical—visibility into supply chains, shared data, and coordinated execution.

Organisations that build these strategic partnerships will be able to operate faster and more efficiently.

Those that remain transactional will struggle.



AutoPulse Host: Looking ahead, as service operations become more digital, how does procurement evolve?

Kumaresan: Procurement becomes predictive. Data will drive decision-making, forecasting demand, optimising inventory, and evaluating supplier performance.

The role of procurement leaders will also change.

They will move from operational execution to strategic advisory, guiding the business on how to structure supply chains, manage risk, and support growth.

This requires new capabilities-data analytics, technology understanding, and cross-functional alignment.

AutoPulse Host: What will the next-generation service ecosystem expect from procurement teams?

Kumaresan: Agility and alignment.

Procurement teams need to be technologically enabled, able to respond quickly to changes, and closely aligned with service operations.

This includes capabilities in analytics, supplier collaboration, digital platforms, and risk management.

The complexity of global supply networks is increasing. Managing that complexity requires both systems and strategic thinking.

AutoPulse Host: Which technologies will have the biggest impact in this transformation?

Kumaresan: Three areas.

AI-driven demand forecasting-improving accuracy and reducing uncertainty.

Digital procurement platforms-streamlining processes and improving visibility. Supplier integration systems-connecting supply chains in real time. These technologies reduce cycle times, improve decision-making, and enhance overall efficiency.

They are not optional-they are becoming foundational.

AutoPulse Host: Let's close with an industry perspective. In the Gulf automotive market, what trend is underestimated today but will become critical?

Kumaresan: Supply chain resilience.

Many organisations still rely on limited supply channels. That creates risk.

The shift toward diversified and regionalised supply networks will become essential.

Resilience is no longer a secondary consideration-it is a core requirement for stability.

AutoPulse Host: And with EVs changing the landscape, how does procurement adapt?

Kumaresan: EVs fundamentally change supply chains. The focus shifts from traditional mechanical parts to batteries, electronics, software-driven diagnostics, and specialised tools. This requires new supplier networks, new sourcing strategies, and new technical capabilities. Procurement teams need to prepare early. Waiting until demand shifts is too late.

The transition is not just technological-it is structural.

AutoPulse Host: From sourcing parts to shaping entire supply ecosystems-that's a shift most operators still underestimate. This was precise, structured, and grounded in real operational thinking.

Kumaresan: Thank you.



FROM WORKSHOP FLOOR TO GROUP STRATEGY

ESLAM ON BUILDING SCALABLE AFTER-SALES SYSTEMS AT AL MANSOUR



ESLAM HAMED



Group Aftersales Director



Al Mansour Automotive, Egypt

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Eslam Hamed is the Group After Sales Director at Al-Mansour Automotive, Egypt. With leadership experience across Mansco, Peugeot, General Motors, and Renault Egypt, he brings deep expertise in aftersales, service operations, and network performance. A mechanical engineer by background, Eslam represents the leaders driving aftersales excellence in the region.

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AutoPulse Host: Eslam, your journey is one of those rare full-circle stories in this industry. You didn't enter at the top-you built your way there. Start from the beginning. What shaped this path?

Eslam: It started very simply.

I began my career right after graduating as a mechanical engineer from Cairo University, working as a workshop team leader. At that time, like many young professionals, I had ambition-but I didn't know how far that ambition would take me.

I remember clearly being asked: What is your dream job?

And I wrote: I want to become the after-sales director of the biggest automotive company in Egypt.

At that time, it was just a statement. Today, after more than two decades, I'm in that position. But the journey was not about luck. It was about consistency. I focused on improving myself every day, competing with my previous version- not with others. That mindset helped me move across every layer of after-sales-technical roles, warranty, workshop supervision, service management, and customer-facing roles.

I didn't skip stages. I lived each one of them.



AutoPulse Host: That depth shows in how you think. You've seen after-sales from the ground up. What were the defining milestones that shaped your leadership today?

Eslam: There were a few key phases.

One was my time with Renault, where I went deep into the technical side. I achieved the highest technical certification- Co-tech- from Renault in France. It's a global recognition, and I was ranked number one worldwide at that time. That experience taught me discipline and technical excellence.

Then moving to General Motors Africa, managing after-sales across 22 countries-that expanded my perspective. You start seeing how scale works, how different markets behave, and how standardization becomes critical.

Later, when I joined Peugeot in Egypt, that was a transformation phase. The brand had strong sales but weak after-sales presence. We restructured the network, aligned operations, put the right people in place-and within two years, Peugeot became the number one European brand in Egypt. That's where I learned how after-sales directly impacts brand success. And today, at Al Mansour, the scale is even larger-multiple brands, multiple markets, and a much more complex ecosystem.

AutoPulse Host: Let's talk about that scale. You're not managing a single brand-you're managing a group structure. What does that actually look like operationally?

Eslam: The structure is layered. Each brand-MG, Chevrolet, Opel, Peugeot, BYD, and others-has its own after-sales head handling day-to-day operations.

But at the group level, we define the strategy, the standards, and the alignment.



AutoPulse Host: Eslam, your journey is one of those rare full-circle stories in this industry. You didn't enter at the top-you built your way there. Start from the beginning. What shaped this path?

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I didn't skip stages. I lived each one of them.

There are also shared functions- parts distribution, training, body and paint, logistics. These are not brand-specific. They support the entire ecosystem.

One important dimension is aftermarket. Around 40% of our after-sales business comes from non-OEM activities- batteries, tires, wholesale parts, especially in commercial vehicles. That diversification is critical. It stabilises revenue and reduces dependency on just OEM service streams.

AutoPulse Host: With over 100 service locations, consistency becomes the real challenge. How do you ensure that the same standard is delivered everywhere?

Eslam: Through structure and discipline.

We created what we call the "Mansour Way"-a comprehensive after-sales handbook. Every process, every action, every expectation is defined there.

Before anyone starts a role, they go through structured onboarding. They are trained on the handbook, tested on it, and only then allowed to operate.

But documentation alone is not enough.

We run continuous audits- internal and external. And these audits are directly linked to performance incentives. That ensures accountability.

On top of that, we use digital dashboards connected to our SAP systems. Performance is tracked daily, weekly, and monthly. Everyone sees the same data, the same reality.

That combination- clear SOPs, training, audits, and real-time data- is what maintains consistency at scale.





AutoPulse Host: You've built a system where operations are measurable and controlled. But the industry is changing fast. Where are you focusing your digital investments?

Eslam: We are building the foundation first. Our entire operation is moving toward a fully digital journey-from customer booking to service execution to invoicing and follow-ups. We've upgraded our DMS to SAP S/4HANA, integrated dashboards across the ecosystem, and are now investing heavily in mobile applications to create a seamless interface for customers.

At the same time, we're digitizing backend operations-especially warehousing and logistics. We handle large volumes-tens of thousands of square meters of storage, dozens of containers monthly, multiple deliveries daily.

Without digital systems, managing that scale efficiently is impossible.

Once the digital layer is fully established, we move to the next phase-AI.

AutoPulse Host: So AI is not the starting point-it's the second layer.

Eslam: Exactly.

AI without a digital foundation creates noise. We need structured data, clean processes, and full visibility first. Once that exists, AI can actually add value.

We've already started in specific areas-inventory management, CRM, lead handling. But the real vision is much larger.

AI will handle customer interactions, bookings, service advisory, follow-ups. It will reduce manual dependency and improve speed and accuracy.

But we are taking a phased approach-build the system first, then enhance it with intelligence.

AutoPulse Host: Let's move into your long-term vision. If you define AI Mansour After-Sales 2.0, what does that look like?

Eslam: The core theme is adaptation. We are entering a new phase- both challenging and full of opportunity. Our five-year vision is built around three main pillars.

First, capacity optimisation. We have large facilities, but not all capacity is used efficiently. We need to right-size operations, align locations with demand, and ensure every facility delivers maximum value.

Second, talent development. There is a shortage of skilled technicians. We've addressed this by building our own technical school. We are creating our own talent pipeline- training people from the ground up. We've also introduced certification programs for leadership roles-service managers, supervisors- ensuring consistency in capability across the organisation.

Third, readiness for future technologies. EVs, hybrid systems, software-driven vehicles- we need to be ready for all of them. This means upgrading facilities, tools, and skills- not partially, but completely. The goal is to create an ecosystem that can handle traditional mechanical work and advanced digital diagnostics under one roof.





AutoPulse Host: That's a structural transformation. What about customer experience in this future model?

Eslam: Customer expectations are very clear. They want the right price, the right time, and convenience.

So the future experience will be largely digital. Customers will interact through applications. They can book services, get estimates, track progress, and complete transactions without needing to speak to anyone.

We already have locations where the entire service journey is digital- from booking to invoicing.

The next phase is to scale this across all operations.

Eventually, AI agents will handle most interactions- customer inquiries, recommendations, follow-ups.

The human role will shift- from transactional to specialised.

AutoPulse Host: That changes the structure of the workshop itself.

Eslam: Completely.

The future service centre will not look like today. Part of it will resemble a technology centre- diagnostics, software updates, digital tools. Another part will still handle traditional mechanical work. You will see fewer people, but more skilled roles. Less manual coordination, more system-driven operations.

Even roles like warranty clerks, storekeepers- many of these will be reduced or transformed through automation.

AutoPulse Host: You've also mentioned unconventional strategies- areas where large dealer networks need to rethink their approach.

Eslam: Two areas- data and collaboration. First, data.

We need to move from reactive to proactive. Using vehicle data, customer behaviour, and usage patterns, we can offer tailored services- maintenance plans, insurance, parts recommendations.

This level of personalisation is still underdeveloped in after-sales. Second, collaboration.

The traditional model is competitive. But in today's environment, collaboration creates efficiency.

We are already doing this- sharing capacity in body shops, supporting other distributors, leveraging partnerships in logistics.

Instead of duplicating investments, we can optimise existing infrastructure across the ecosystem.

This reduces cost and increases utilisation.

AutoPulse Host: Final perspective. With EVs, software-driven vehicles, and changing customer behavior- where do you see after-sales heading?

Eslam: Two shifts are clear.

First, reduced traditional maintenance. EVs require less mechanical servicing. That will impact revenue structures.

Second, increased importance of data and digital services.



After-sales will move toward predictive maintenance, personalized offerings, and new revenue streams beyond traditional repairs. Dealerships will need to rethink their business models-optimize capacity, explore collaborations, and build new services.

The future is not about doing the same work more efficiently. It's about redefining what after-sales actually means.

AutoPulse Host: From workshop floor to group strategy-there's a clear through-line in how you think: structure, discipline, and forward adaptation.

Thanks for sharing this, Eslam.

Eslam:

Thank you. It was a valuable discussion.





ADAPT. BUILD. SCALE: MOHIT PUNJABI ON GROWING AUTOMOTIVE SERVICE OPERATIONS ACROSS AFRICA



MOHIT PUNJABI

General Manager,
At The Wheel, Tanzania

“

Mohit Punjabi is the General Manager at At The Wheel, Tanzania's multi-location tyre and auto service network.

With a focus on customer service, operations, and business growth, he represents the leaders strengthening Africa's automotive aftermarket through reliable fitment centres, service accessibility, and professional retail execution.

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AutoPulse Host: Mohit, your journey stands out because it wasn't built in a structured corporate ladder-it was built across geographies, cultures, and ground realities. Start from the beginning. What really shaped your entry into this industry?

Mohit Punjabi: It started early, and it started from zero.

I entered the automotive industry in 2015 in Ghana when I was just 20 years old. At that time, I didn't have a technical background in automotive service. I was learning everything from scratch-how tyres function, why alignment and balancing matter, how customer complaints translate into technical issues.

But what made it more challenging was the environment.

I wasn't just learning a business-I was adapting to a completely new country. New culture, new people, new ways of working. I had to build relationships with technicians, understand customer behavior, and even pick up bits of local languages just to connect better.

Those early years forced me to grow quickly. You don't have the luxury of time when you're in a new environment and expected to deliver.

Over time, I worked across UAE, Ghana, Nigeria, and now Tanzania. Each market is different. But the fundamentals stayed consistent-learn continuously, build strong relationships, and deliver honest service.

One mindset helped me navigate all of this: adapt or perish.

At first, it was just something I believed in. Over time, it became instinct. You learn to adjust quickly to any situation-new teams, new markets, new challenges. That adaptability becomes your biggest strength.



AutoPulse Host: That level of adaptability is rare. Most operators struggle even within a single market. How did working across regions change the way you look at the automotive service business?

Mohit Punjabi: It gave me perspective.

When you work in multiple markets, you start seeing patterns. You realize that while conditions differ-economics, customer behavior, infrastructure-the core of the business remains the same.

Customers want reliability.

They want honesty.

They want value for money.

At the same time, you also see how market maturity changes expectations.

In some regions, customers are still learning about preventive maintenance. In others, they are already demanding faster service and more transparency.

So the key is not to apply a fixed model everywhere. It's to understand the market, adapt your approach, but stay consistent with your core principles.

That balance is what makes operations sustainable across geographies.



AutoPulse Host: Let's talk specifically about East Africa. You've been operating there closely. What defines this market today?

Mohit Punjabi:

The market is growing rapidly.

There are more vehicles coming onto the road every year. That naturally increases demand for service centres, tyres, and automotive products. At the same time, customer awareness is improving. People are starting to understand the importance of maintenance and safety.

But there are two realities that exist together. First, the market is highly price-sensitive. Customers are careful about spending, especially on service.

Second, service quality is inconsistent. You have a wide variation, from highly professional setups to very unstructured operations.

That creates a gap.

Businesses that can deliver consistent quality and build trust will stand out. Not immediately, but over time, they will create a strong position in the market.

AutoPulse Host: That gap between demand and quality is where most businesses either grow or fail. From your experience, what actually makes a workshop operationally strong?

Mohit Punjabi: It comes down to three pillars: systems, people, and consistency. Most workshops focus heavily on one or two of these but ignore the third.

Systems bring structure. They define how work flows, how tasks are executed, and how performance is measured.

People bring capability. Skilled technicians, trained advisors, and a disciplined team are essential.

Consistency brings reliability. Without consistency, even a good system and a good team will fail to deliver a stable experience. When all three come together, operations become predictable.

At @TheWheel, we've focused on building this structure. The idea is simple-no matter when a customer walks in, the experience should not change. That's what builds trust over time.

AutoPulse Host:

Most workshops remain dependent on individuals rather than systems. How do you move away from that dependency?

Mohit Punjabi: By defining processes clearly.

If operations depend on individuals, performance becomes inconsistent. One good technician can create a great experience, but the next one may not.

When processes are defined-how inspections are done, how communication happens, how work is executed-you reduce variability.

Training also plays a key role.

People need to understand not just what to do, but why they are doing it. That understanding improves execution quality.

Over time, systems take over the dependency from individuals. And that's when the business becomes scalable.

AutoPulse Host: Customer expectations are evolving fast. What are the biggest changes you're seeing in how customers behave?



Mohit Punjabi: Customers today are more aware and more demanding.

They want transparency. They want to understand what work is being done on their vehicle and why.

They expect speed. Long waiting times are no longer acceptable.

And they expect professionalism-how they are treated matters as much as the service itself. Communication has become critical.

If you can explain things clearly, set the right expectations, and handle interactions professionally, you already differentiate yourself from many workshops.

The technical work is important, but the experience around it is what customers remember.

AutoPulse Host: Where do you see most workshops failing in this area?

Mohit Punjabi:

In communication and consistency.

Many workshops do good technical work, but they don't communicate effectively. Customers don't understand what was done or why it was necessary.

That creates doubt.

And once doubt enters the relationship, trust weakens. Consistency is the second issue.

If a customer has a good experience once and a poor experience the next time, they lose confidence.

So it's not just about delivering quality-it's about delivering it every single time.

AutoPulse Host: Let's bring technology into the picture. How important is it becoming in workshop operations?

Mohit Punjabi: Technology is becoming essential.

Modern vehicles require advanced diagnostic tools and precise equipment. Even basic services today rely on technology.

With EVs entering the market, this becomes even more important.

Workshops need to invest in tools, but more importantly, they need to invest in training. Technology without skilled technicians is ineffective.

The workshops that prepare early-by upgrading equipment and training their teams-will be better positioned for the future.

AutoPulse Host: What are the biggest structural challenges the ecosystem still faces?

Mohit Punjabi: The first is technician skill development. Vehicles are evolving faster than the workforce. Workshops need technicians who are continuously learning.

The second is the quality of the parts.

In many markets, there's a mix of genuine and low-quality products. This affects service outcomes and customer trust.

The third is trust itself.

Every workshop has to earn it. And it takes time. One bad experience can undo multiple good ones. So building trust is not a one-time effort-it's an ongoing process.



AutoPulse Host: When you look ahead, how do you see the structure of automotive service changing?

Mohit Punjabi: It will become more organised and more integrated.

Instead of fragmented services, we will see complete automotive care centres—places where customers can get everything done in one location.

These centres will be more structured, more technology-driven, and more focused on customer experience.

Service standards will improve. Processes will become more defined.

And customers will start expecting a higher level of professionalism.

The industry will move from informal setups to structured operations.

Those who adapt early will lead that transition.

AutoPulse Host: Across all these markets, what has been the one constant that defines success?

Mohit Punjabi: People.

No matter where you operate, the business always comes down to people.

Customers trust people, not systems.

Technicians define the quality of service. Teams define the experience.

If you invest in your people, train them, support them, and build the right culture, you create a strong foundation

And if you treat customers honestly, they come back.

That's something I've seen consistently across every country I've worked in.

AutoPulse Host: You've also had strong mentorship and support throughout your journey. How has that influenced your growth?

Mohit Punjabi: It's been critical.

Mentors played a big role in shaping how I think and operate. They provided guidance during key moments and helped me avoid mistakes.

My family has also been a strong support system.

And personally, I believe faith has guided me through this journey.

No one builds something like this alone. There are always people behind your growth.

AutoPulse Host: If you had to distil everything into one principle for someone entering this industry, what would it be?





Mohit Punjabi: Focus on quality and trust.
This industry is built on relationships.
If customers trust your service, they will return.

At the same time, invest in your people, especially technicians. They are the backbone of your operations.

And keep learning. My approach has always been: learn, unlearn, relearn because the industry keeps evolving. At the end of the day, cars may be machines, but this business is about people. If you take care of your customers and your team, the business will grow.

AutoPulse Host:

From adapting across continents to building structured operations, your journey reflects the reality of where this industry is headed. Ground-level learning, operational discipline, and human-centric thinking.

That combination is what will define the next generation of automotive service.

Mohit Punjabi:

Thank you.



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