

# CollisionLink Represents 'Inevitable Change' Says Major Parts Dealer

by Ed Attanasio

Back when Galpin Motors' Parts Manager **Butch Lemen** was 12 years old, he worked with his father in the aircraft parts industry, some time before the advent of personal computers. Computers are now indispensable in parts departments and body shops worldwide. But, although many body shops have em-

people will call once we receive the order. It's a streamlined process and allows shops to go on with the other multiple tasks that happen every day in your average body shop."

Lemen says he has seen *CollisionLink* work time after time in helping him to get orders and assist shops in getting OE parts on more repairs without paying more than the aftermarket. "It's a

savvy and already using the Internet as a tool to improve their business. The computer age isn't the future anymore, we're right in the middle of it, and still, many of my customers don't even have computers in their shops yet."

Once his shop customers take the leap of faith and embrace *CollisionLink*, it quickly becomes a daily part of their lives, Lemen reasons. But, getting them to take that first step can be difficult. "It's getting people to accept a change, it's just that simple. Change comes along no matter what, but the old days of going through catalogs and writing down part numbers is tedious and no longer efficient. Now, if you went into these forward-thinking shops and told them they had to go back to using those books, they might beat you up. They were reluctant a few years back, but now they can't do business without the computers and systems like *CollisionLink*. It's just a matter of accepting the change and seeing a new way of doing things, in order to make their shops more efficient and profitable."

Using *CollisionLink* is easy and most people can be proficient at it within just several days, Lemen said. "The majority of the body shop management systems out there right now contain all the parts pricing already. When the insurance company tells the shop 'you need to use this aftermarket part to save money,' that's when *CollisionLink* steps in. Once their estimate is approved by the insurance company, they send it to us electronically and we call it the "1-2-3 Go," because it's just three steps, push a button and it's done.

Getting good at using it is a matter of repetition, just like anything else. To make it easier, I'll send one of our reps to the shop and he'll go through the training, both on-site and over the phone, with *CollisionLink's* staff. It normally takes 15-30 minutes to learn the system and how to use it."

Once his customer sends him the invoice, Lemen and his staff can go through it and identify the parts to make certain they are correct for the repair. "Once I get the order, I simply open the file, import the file and push one button and everything else happens automatically. Once we've determined that it's accurate, we can call the body shop and discuss the pricing or other options, for example."

If Galpin can meet or beat the aftermarket, it can obviously benefit both his operation and the body shop

involved, he said. "We can beat the aftermarket prices in many cases. We're going up against the aftermarket and the used parts industry as well. For example, we received an estimate earlier today and within less than two hours, it was processed. We were able to meet or beat the aftermarket on 14 parts on the invoice and the shop bought them all. Our overall conversion rate for June was 71%, so, that's significant."

One of Galpin's customers using *CollisionLink* is *Autoworld Collision* in Valencia, California, a 14-year-old shop owned by Maurice Starrantino. "We've been using *CollisionLink* for at least a year, and it's been a Godsend. By using it, we're able to provide our customers with OE parts where we couldn't before. These manufacturers want to incorporate factory parts in our repairs, and this is the best way to do it. On some items such as hoods, fenders, bumpers and many sheet metal parts, Galpin can match or beat the aftermarket parts a majority of the time, depending on the brand and the repair. *CollisionLink* is easy-to-use and now a part of our daily operations, so we definitely rely on it and value it."



From left, Galpin Motors Sales Rep **Joe Jotikasthira**; Sales Rep **Gerardo Sanchez**; Warehouse Manager **Tom Thompson**; Ford Motor Co. Rep **Anne Tran-Malone**; Assistant Warehouse Manager **Istvan Gerlei**; Wholesale Parts Manager **Butch Lemen** and Sales Rep **Javier Gonzalez** receive yet another award for hitting top numbers year after year

braced the software and the Internet methods, there are still a ton of shops out there that are reluctant to accept what Lemen calls, "the inevitable."

Lemen is a strong advocate for *CollisionLink*, the Internet-based electronic parts ordering system designed by *OEConnection* for OEM parts dealerships and body shops. By using the system, shops can save time and money while including more original factory parts in their repairs. *CollisionLink's* price comparison feature is currently used by shops of all sizes, from little independent facilities all the way to large chains.

Lemen manages a multi-million dollar wholesale parts operation at *Galpin Motors* in North Hills, Calif. With 75 employees in his department and selling parts for the 10 brands they represent (Ford, Lincoln, Subaru, Mazda, Honda, Volvo, Jaguar, Aston-Martin, Lotus and Spyker), Lemen values the time-saving aspect associated with using *CollisionLink*.

"*CollisionLink* makes us more efficient and can save time for the shops that participate," Lemen explained. "It frees up the shops' time, because they don't have to make phone calls searching for a part and/or waiting for a response. All of the correspondence through *CollisionLink* is handled via e-mails, and our parts

conduit for electronic parts ordering, but many body shops are still in the habit of ordering parts over the phone or via FAX. We can assist the body shops by providing parts with better fit and finish while delivering the parts quickly and improving cycle times."

Lemen recognized the importance of this system more than a year ago when Galpin starting offering it, but now he wants his shop customers to



By utilizing *CollisionLink*, Galpin's customers can incorporate more factory parts into their estimates without paying more than the aftermarket

see the light as well. "We've been an advocate for *CollisionLink* for awhile now and we do have customers who use it and like it and we're trying to get more shops up and running with it on a daily basis, so that we can put some more OE parts into their hands. We have roughly 30 shops currently signed up with *CollisionLink*, and they tend to be shops that are computer-



Owner Maurice Starrantino (left) and Assistant Manager Jesse Elizondo at *Autoworld Collision* in Valencia are using *CollisionLink* with great success to identify and purchase OE parts and get them into more of their repairs

*CollisionLink* software operates on PCs from Windows XP on up and is completely free to body shops. It can only be used to order OEM parts.

It can be used with all of the leading systems already being used by most body shops, including Mitchell UltraMate Advanced Estimating System, CCC One Total Repair Platform, CCC Pathways Estimating Solution and Audatex. If a shop has another system, *CollisionLink's* reps can help them to get it set up.

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