



Collision repair facility boosts speed and accuracy of estimates, along with customer satisfaction

Heitzman Body & Paint Inc.

Since 1937, the highly trained technicians, state-of-the-art equipment, and commitment to quality at Heitzman Body & Paint Inc. have helped the company keep its customers happy and vehicles on the road. With years of Audatex Shoplink® estimating software experience, Heitzman estimators found it easy to move to Audatex® Estimating™ in 2006—allowing them to continue partnering with key insurance agencies while speeding up estimates, increasing estimating accuracy, and ramping up their level of customer service.

Industry

Collision Repair Facilities

Products

Audatex Estimating, Audatex Shoplink



Heitzman Body & Paint Inc.

Challenge

Countless body shops in the Beaverton, Oregon area create a very competitive market for Heitzman Body & Paint. So the company remains determined to carve out a business strategy that supports its customers today while paving the way for the company's success in the future. With a portion of Heitzman customers coming to them through insurance carrier direct repair programs (DRPs), the company considers these industry partnerships important to meeting key business and revenue objectives. In 2006, when partners American Family Insurance and Liberty Mutual moved their DRPs to Audatex Estimating, Heitzman knew it was time to follow their lead. "Audatex Estimating allowed us to maintain our volume of customers from these insurance companies, which is critical for our business," says John Griggs, Shop Foreman at Heitzman.

What Heitzman didn't know, however, was that Audatex was going to deliver them a more streamlined, accurate estimating process than the competitor solution they were using in those DRP programs at the time. "Audatex Estimating is easier to use and creates better estimates faster than the other application," says Griggs. "We were happy to let the contract expire on the other estimating program."

Audatex Solution

The mission at Heitzman Body & Paint is clear: To repair vehicles with zero inconvenience to their customers. Making the transition to Audatex Estimating was painless and trouble-free for Heitzman employees. In late 2006, an Audatex Technical Support team implemented Audatex Estimating using an available workstation at the repair facility. Then in just a matter of days, Heitzman users were up and running on Audatex Estimating. "Online training was easy because we could do it at our leisure and not have to go to an off-site training facility," says Griggs. "We could do it right here at our desks. Plus, in many ways Audatex Estimating mirrored Shoplink, so it wasn't foreign to us. The training wasn't complicated and took less than an hour for each of us to complete. Our manager, the estimator, and I were using Audatex within a week of installation." Since then, their users have received additional training through an interactive Audatex webinar on creating vehicle inspection reports (VIRs).

Heitzman uses their LAN-based Audatex Estimating program for estimating automobile repair costs—

both for individual customers and their insurance industry partners. With a direct connection to Audatex's proprietary Parts and Labor Database, the body shop can create accurate estimates based on pricing specific to their region. "We just plug in our zip code and drill down to the information we need, and the program pulls in current data like used parts information from the Audatex Collision Estimating Database," says Griggs. "That makes it easy for us because we can retrieve those recycled parts without having to make a phone call. It streamlines the process for us."

Shop estimators know they can count on current, accurate information for developing their estimates. "We receive monthly updates from an Audatex CD to get current prices, current models, and so on," notes Griggs. "And every quarter we get a visit from a Technical Support Rep who checks on how we're doing with Audatex, whether we have any questions. She keeps us informed on any new products and services. But day to day, we've never needed to call on Technical Support. We just haven't had any problems with Audatex Estimating."

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- John Griggs, Shop Foreman, Heitzman Body & Paint Inc., Beaverton, Oregon

Results

Heitzman knows the importance of doing a job well. In fact, visit their website and you'll get the idea when they say, "We want your vehicle repaired right—the first time!" So it stands to reason that Heitzman appreciates the first-time accuracy of Audatex Estimating. "Audatex Estimating is more thorough than any other estimating programs," says Griggs. "It thinks from the inside out rather than the outside in. If you're replacing a headlight on a certain vehicle, for instance, and in order to replace that headlight you have to remove the bumper, Audatex Estimating will automatically include the time it takes to remove that bumper. With the other program we were using, we had to stop and think about the process of replacing the headlight on that vehicle. Then we'd have to go to the "bumper" section of the software and so on. So we'd have to start with the bumper and work in, which is a totally different process. But Audatex automatically includes all of the operations needed in the process. It does more of the thinking for us, more of the estimating for us."

The high degree of estimating accuracy translates into clear benefits for Heitzman. "Because Audatex Estimating is more thorough, we get a more accurate estimate for the customer and the insurance company," says Griggs. "If the estimator or the software leaves out certain processes in producing the estimate, we can end up losing time and money in the long run.

The speed and ease of the program also help boost Heitzman employee productivity and keep business processes running smoothly. According to Griggs, "Audatex is the fastest estimating program we've used. And it's easier to use than the other estimating programs. It just makes sense to me the way it works. I can follow it, we can all follow it."

Yet besides workflow improvements for employees, Heitzman customers also benefit from the advantages of having a world-class, next-generation estimating application in the hands of Heitzman estimators. Griggs says that the added functionality inherent in the Audatex Estimating software helps everyone involved in the estimating process—from employees to customers to insurance agencies. For instance, Griggs notes, "With Audatex we're able to e-mail the estimates and pictures directly to vehicle owners and insurance companies. It's a seamless process tied to the estimates themselves. It's just easier than the other programs and so the process takes fewer resources here."

And Heitzman likes the convenience that Audatex offers repair facility customers. "Audatex Estimating is quicker than our previous software in getting our customers their estimate. The less time they have to take out of their day sitting in our shop waiting for the estimate, the better."



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