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# BETOUGH

Draw a line and get what you're owed.

By Sam Piercey

**W**e are going into a new year as I write this. Same old, same old. You would think that after 45 years things would have changed for the better. They have in some ways, but not in others.

There are still some insurance companies that get it, and there still some that don't. The ones that don't get it re-

When you call to collect, they don't return your call, or they say they didn't receive it, or they suddenly discover they're not happy with the repair. It goes on and on and I'm sure you've heard it and seen it just as much as I have.

It's time for us to put our feet down about this. The solution isn't going to win you any friends, but it's simple. Do not release the car until the customer

## IN THIS BUSINESS, WE HAVE TO BE TOUGH.

ally give the impression that they don't want to work with us to satisfy our mutual customers. These are the ones that say things like "Well, if you go to that shop, we won't guarantee the work!" The fact is that we guarantee our work, not the insurance company. That's the way it's always been.

These are the same insurance companies that also try to bully customers into using a DRP shop, when the customer really wants to go somewhere else. Over the years, I've seen and heard it all.

They want to send work to the DRPs. I get that. I really do. Still, customers get to take their car to their preferred facility. Discouraging them from doing so is bad business.

Here's something that just bugs me: sending the cheque co-pay to the policyholder's home. We've finished the repair in good faith, the customer has their vehicle back, and now we have to chase them for the money? Ridiculous!

Sending the policyholder the cheque just creates trouble for the shop. Not with everyone, of course. Most people are honest, but some aren't. I've seen cases where the policyholder simply cashed the cheque and kept the money.

brings the cheque. Tell them in advance that it's cash on delivery, or there's no delivery.

As I said, this won't win you any friends, but I think this what we sometimes need to do just to get the money we're owed for our repairs. The insurance company has paid out, so as far as they're concerned there's nothing they can or should do.

It's up to us to fight for that money, so avoid the fight in the first place by making it crystal clear to your customers that until the cheque clears or you have cash in your hand, you're not releasing the car.

This might sound tough. Well, it is tough. In this business, we have to be tough, or the few bad apples out there will walk all over us.

Most customers are honest, most shop owners are honest, most insurers are honest. Watch out for the dishonest ones and hang tough. <sup>CRM</sup>



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