

The U.S. General Auto Repair Shop Survey Report

Essential insights and benchmarks from a survey of 700 auto repair shops & professionals.



Contents

INTRODUCTION	3	PARTS ORDERING.....	18
DEMOGRAPHICS	4	Who orders parts.....	18
Shop types	4	Who influences parts ordering.....	19
Shop roles.....	5	Important factors when ordering parts.....	19
Additional demographics	6	Parts ordering methods.....	20
Age range	6	Parts ordering activities	21
How participants entered industry	6	Parts suppliers & dealers	21
Years in the industry	7	Customers and parts	22
When participants plan to retire.....	7	Part-type ordering.....	22
Location by region.....	8	TECHNICIAN STAFFING	23
Shop size and scale	9	Impact of technician shortage	23
VEHICLE OWNER & CUSTOMER		How to stay competitive when attracting	
INFORMATION.....	10	& retaining technicians	24
Customer spending habits and repair		How well shops are retaining technicians	26
decisions.....	10	Apprenticeship programs.....	26
Customer willingness to approve work.....	10	Career path opportunities for technicians.....	27
Average vehicle mileage	11	How shops invest in their technicians.....	28
Proactive vs reactive maintenance.....	11	Sharing financial information	29
SHOP OPERATIONS.....	13	Technician shortage outlook	29
Average labor rate.....	13	TECHNICIAN PERSPECTIVE	30
Average repair order (ARO) value.....	14	What keeps technicians engaged.....	31
How to positively impact ARO	15	Technician shortage & retention	32
TECHNOLOGY & SOFTWARE	16	CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES	33
Value of shop management solutions.....	16	Checklist for Implementing Operational	
Common shop software.....	17	Improvements	34
		Final Thoughts	36



INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the latest edition of the U.S. General Auto Repair Shop Survey Report. In September 2025, we surveyed nearly 700 mechanical shops to identify trends, challenges, and opportunities in the general auto repair industry and their impact on repair shops across the US. Our initial survey – and now this report – focuses on key areas within the repair shop environment, including:

- Shop Operations
- Vehicle Owner & Customer Information
- Technology & Software
- Parts Ordering
- Hiring & Retaining Technicians
- Technician Perspective
- Challenges & Opportunities Ahead



In September 2025, we surveyed nearly 700 mechanical shops to identify trends, challenges, and opportunities in the general auto repair industry and their impact on repair shops across the US.

Now more than ever, whether you're a shop owner or technician, working in auto repair is more than fixing cars; it's a business that involves serving customers, retaining employees, managing workflows, and constantly adapting as the industry evolves. This report reflects that reality and provides a snapshot of the industry in 2025 along with actionable information designed to help your shop stay competitive and thrive in the years ahead.

From streamlining your shop's workflow to addressing industry hurdles proactively, this year's report provides expert-backed insights to further equip your shop with the tools and knowledge you need to navigate today's auto repair landscape. Plus, you will also find linked resources and insights from industry leaders throughout this report that dive even deeper into the most critical issues presented.



The overall goal of this report is to provide a clear look at the current state of the general auto repair industry alongside practical takeaways to help you run a smoother, more efficient shop positioned for long-term growth.

**Due to rounding, percentages in this report may not total precisely 100%.*



A Quick Look at Who Participated in this Year's U.S. General Auto Repair Shop Survey Report

With nearly 700 responses to this year's survey, the people and their respective shop businesses and operations were bound to be diverse. From the mom-and-pop operations to multi-location organizations, this year's findings reflect an industry that is as varied as the vehicles it services – and while many shops can identify their primary operations, most provide a range of services and specialties.

Shop types

While the majority of participants identified their shops as **General Repair**, it's also not surprising to find that repair shops are difficult to categorize and rarely fit within a single descriptor. While **General Repair** received the highest number of responses, the additional leading categories include the following operations and specialties: **Tire Shop, Specialty Repair, Quick Lube, Performance Shop, Used Car Dealer, and Mobile Mechanic**.

Here are the types of businesses & operations we heard from the most:



91%

General Repair

Provides a wide range of repair and maintenance services for various vehicle makes and models



27%

Tire Shop

Offers tire sales, installations, and related services, such as alignments and balancing



23%

Specialty Repair

Focuses on specific types of repairs or services, such as transmission, engine, or electrical work



21%

Quick Lube

Specializes in fast oil changes and basic maintenance services, like fluid checks and tire rotations

8%

Performance Shop

Concentrates on enhancing vehicle performance through modifications and tuning

8%

Used Car Dealer

Serves pre-owned vehicles to recondition and sell

4%

Mobile Mechanic

Provides on-site vehicle repairs and services at the customer's location

**Respondents were given the opportunity to select multiple options and percentages will exceed 100%.*

Other participants include:

New Car Dealers, OEM Dealerships, Fleet Companies, Utility Maintenance Shops, Emergency Vehicles & Governments, Diesel Repairs, Heavy Duty & Heavy Trucks, Equipment & Heavy Machinery, Diagnostic Electric & Auto Electrical Repairs, Module Programmings, Key Programmings, Diagnostics, Classic Car Modification & Restorations, Off-Road Accessories, Marine Repairs & Maintenance, Nonprofits, German Cars, and Alignments.

Role in the shop

Just like the shops themselves, the teams behind them span a variety of roles, each contributing to the quality service customers depend on. Of the approximate 700 respondents, **nearly half identified as a Shop Owner (40%)**. Participants also included: **Shop Manager (36%)**, **Service Advisor (16%)**, **Other (5%)**, and **Technician (3%)**, adding a range of diverse perspectives to this year's report.



40%

Shop
owner



36%

Shop
manager



16%

Service
advisor



3%

Mechanic/
Technician

5%
other



The biggest gains in repair shop performance aren't coming from adding more work - they're coming from **tightening the workflows between people, processes, and technology.**

Darren Williams

Senior Product Manager, Vehlo

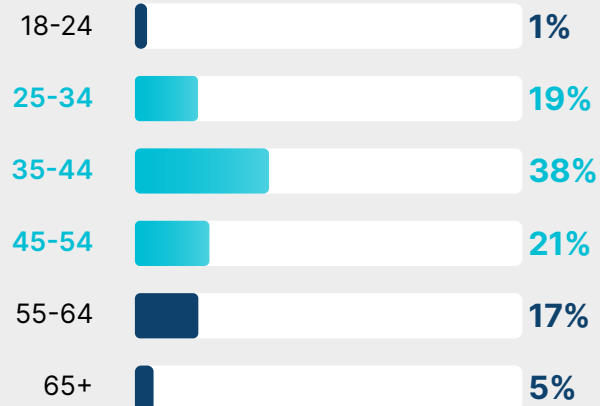
**Due to rounding, percentages in this report may not total precisely 100%.*

Additional demographics

To further breakdown the demographics behind this year's survey, here's a look at the age range of participants, how they entered the industry, their experience within the industry, and years to retirement. Plus, you can see where participants are located within the US:

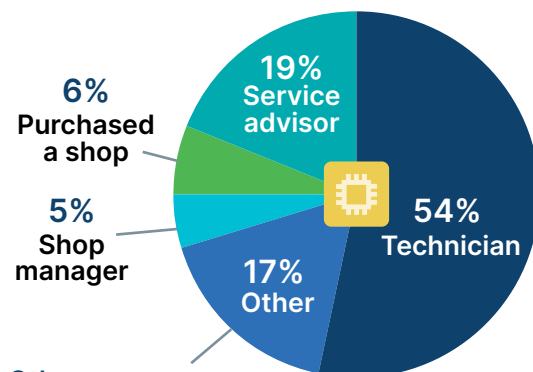
Age range

While the **majority of this year's respondents identified as being in the 35-44 age range**, responses came in from professionals aged 18-24 and extended up to 65+.



How participants first entered the industry

While the majority of respondents are mid-career and currently identify as a shop owner, the survey found that **the most common entry point into the industry was as a Technician (54%)**. A good portion of participants also started as **Service Advisors (19%)**, **Other (17%)**, **Purchased a Shop (6%)**, or began as a **Shop Manager (5%)**.



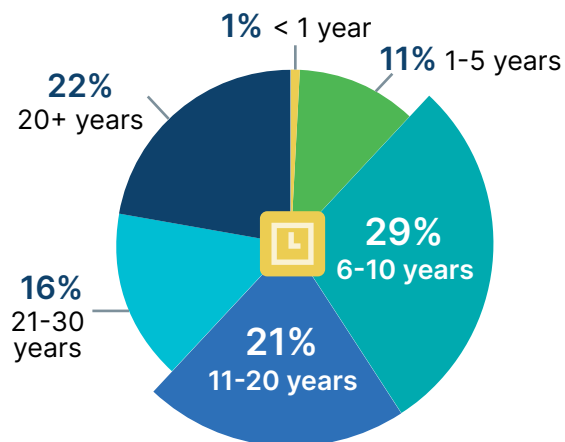
Other responses:

Opened Shop Business, Work at or Inherited Family-Owned Shop, Started in Parts or Retail, or Started in Entry-Level or Support Role

**Due to rounding, percentages in this report may not total precisely 100%.*

Years in the industry

This year's survey reflects feedback from folks with a wide range of experience, with **most participants working in the industry between 6-10 years (29%)** with the second highest number of respondents having **20+ years of industry experience (22%)**.



When participants plan to retire

The average participants in this year's survey can likely be classified as mid-career with **most planning to retire in 21-30 years**.

Less than 5 years 7%

5-10 years 18%

11-20 years 22%

21-30 years 30%

31-40 years 7%

41-50 years 2%

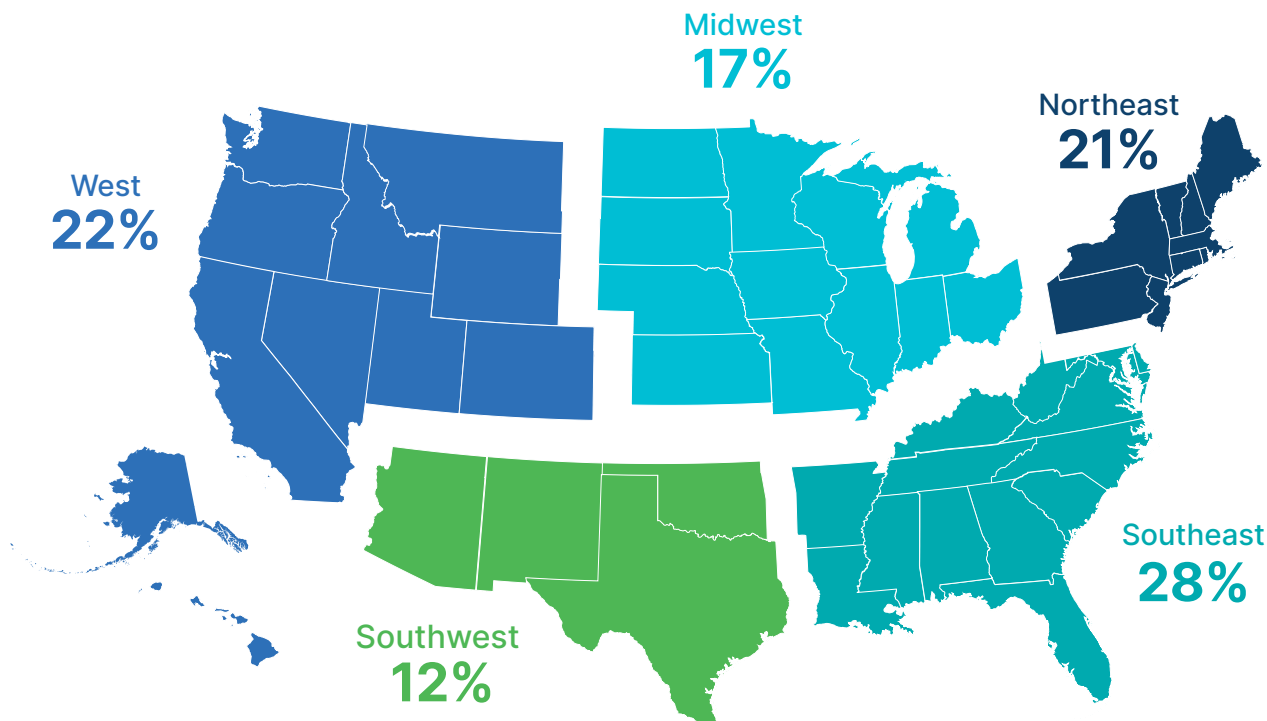
50+ years 2%

Don't plan to retire 10%

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Location by region

From the Northeast to Southwest and all the way up to Alaska, this year's participants come from all over the United States! Here's a look at how this year's survey represents nearly every part of the country:



Northeast

Connecticut
Maine
Massachusetts
New Hampshire
New Jersey
New York
Pennsylvania
Rhode Island
Vermont

Southeast

Alabama
Arkansas
Delaware
District of Columbia
Florida
Georgia
Kentucky
Louisiana
Maryland
Mississippi
North Carolina
South Carolina
Tennessee
Virginia
West Virginia

Midwest

Illinois
Indiana
Iowa
Kansas
Michigan
Minnesota
Missouri
Nebraska
North Dakota
Ohio
South Dakota
Wisconsin

Southwest

Arizona
New Mexico
Oklahoma
Texas

West

Alaska
California
Colorado
Hawaii
Idaho
Montana
Nevada
Oregon
Utah
Washington
Wyoming

Shop size & scale

Before we get into the numbers, here's a quick look at the typical repair operation represented in this year's survey, including:

- Locations & bays
- Daily car count
- Technicians & service writers



Average

How many locations do you have?



3.25

How many bays do you have?



8.15

What is your daily car count?



12.25

How many technicians work in your shop?



6.42

How many service writers/advisors are at your shop?



2.09

**Note on above averages: Statistical outliers were removed in an effort to most accurately reflect the shops and participants in this year's report.*

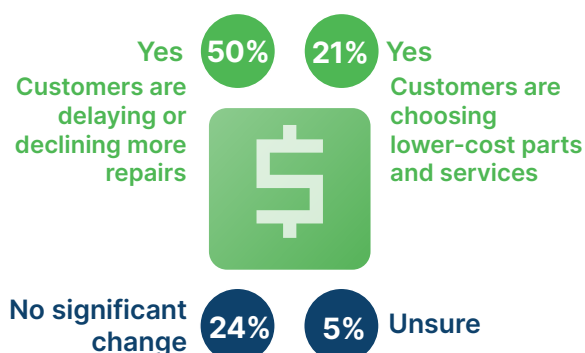


While operational size and scale reflect a shop's performance capacity and output, running a successful shop requires an understanding of the customers who come through the door. The shops that participated in the survey, while staying busy, did suggest that customer visits and spending habits are shifting. Understanding consumer spending behaviors, alongside vehicle maintenance decisions, helps shops understand how and when to engage and educate customers.



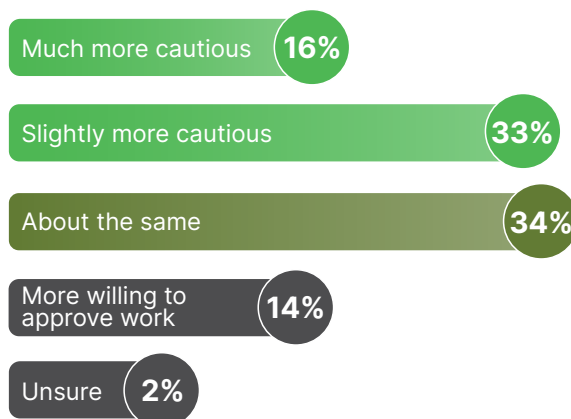
Have shops noticed a change in customer spending habits & repair decisions?

Out of nearly 700 shops surveyed, **50%** said their customers are either **delaying or declining work**. This signals a growing sense of financial caution among vehicle owners, which many shops will need to adapt to if these trends remain consistent.



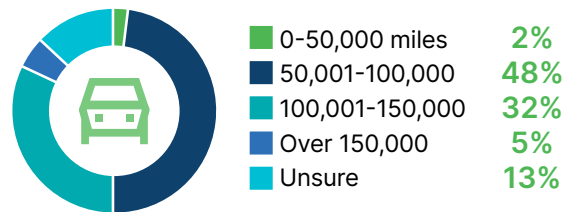
Are customers more or less willing to approve recommended work?

Compared to last year, **49% of shops** say customers are **more cautious about approving non-required work**. That trend is reinforced by the 54% of respondents who report fewer customers coming in consistently for proactive maintenance (p. 11).



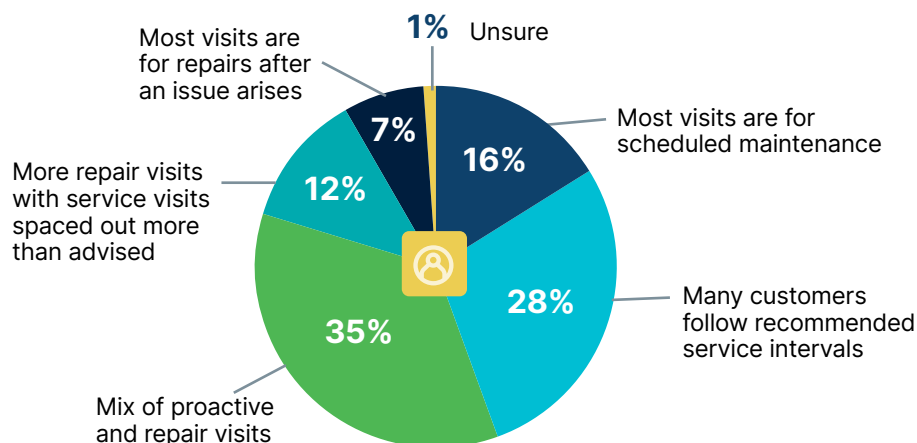
Average vehicle mileage

When it comes to the vehicles shops are seeing most often, **nearly 80% have between 50,000 and 150,000 miles.** Only 2% of vehicles are under 50,000 miles, while only 5% are over 150,000 miles.



How often customers come in for proactive maintenance

In terms of maintenance behavior, the data shows that while some customers are consistent with upkeep, most fall somewhere in the middle. **Most respondents (35%) reported a mix of proactive and repair-based visits**, indicating that while maintenance remains a major driver of shop activity, reactive repair work still makes up a significant portion of visits as well.



54%

of shops are **not** seeing customers consistently come in for proactive maintenance

Proactive Maintenance vs Reactive Maintenance

Proactive

- Regular oil changes and fluid checks
- Scheduled brake inspections
- Tire rotations and pressure checks
- Wheel alignments at recommended intervals
- Timing belt/major component replacements on schedule
- Battery testing before seasonal weather changes

Reactive

- Check engine light diagnostics and unexpected repairs
- Brake noise, grinding, or sudden braking issues
- Flat tires, blowouts, or sidewall damage
- Overheating or major component failures
- Realignment or repair after noticeable pulling/vibration

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Our quantitative survey work with general repair shops reveals similar insight. Specifically, **shops are reporting both growing customer concern regarding repair costs and increasing purchases of entry-level or low-cost parts.** This trend aligns with rising costs of vehicle ownership overall, including purchase price, financing, insurance and maintenance costs. On the consumer side, we talked to 100,000 households per year. There, we see growing delayed maintenance and a steady increase in the desire to finance major repairs.”

Rob Pietrowsky, Vice President, Research IMR | Endeavor Business Intelligence

This blend of scheduled repair and reactive repair offers an opportunity for shops to guide customers toward more proactive maintenance schedules and educate them on preventative care. Most vehicles tend to see an increase in maintenance needs as they approach the 100,000 mile mark, but proper care can extend vehicle life well beyond that.

How can shops engage more cost-cautious customers?

In the current environment, education and transparency will make the difference in customer interactions. Explaining why certain maintenance tasks matter, how they help prevent future costs, and what the repair process involves can encourage customers to take a more active role in their vehicle’s upkeep. For higher-cost repairs, offering flexibility when possible, like payment plans and staged repair scheduling options, can make those larger bills more manageable for customers without compromising safety.

Ultimately, trust remains at the center of every successful customer relationship. Being upfront about pricing, explaining the reasoning behind costs, and showing that recommendations are made with safety in mind all help build lasting loyalty.

That said (and this is true for most businesses) consumer purchasing and financial decisions directly impact performance, financials, and operations. In the **Shop Operations** section, survey respondents share insights from their operational practices and trends in 2025.



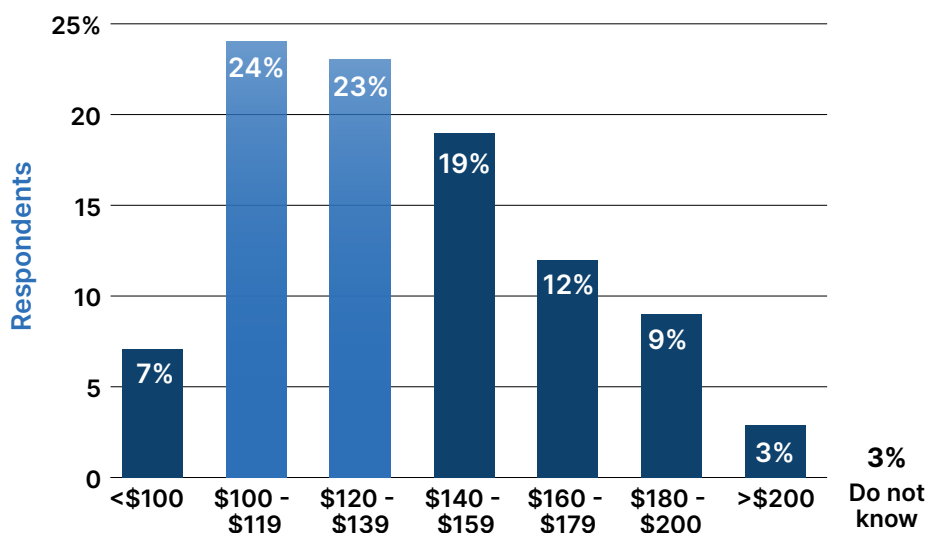
From cost-cautious customers to supply chain disruptions, **discover how you can build resiliency in your repair shop during uncertain times.** [Click here to read.](#)

From the time it takes to write a repair order (RO) to a shop's gross annual revenue, this section dives into the numbers behind each repair shop. Survey questions within the shop operations section were designed to identify trends behind shop operations and financial performance. Here's a full breakdown of:

- Average Labor Rates
- Average Repair Order Value (ARO)
- How to Positively Impact ARO

Average labor rate

Shop labor rates, like most comparative trends between shops, vary based on the shop's specialty, size, and location. This year's survey participants **identified an average labor rate of \$100-\$119**. Nearly **50% of respondents selected an average labor rate between \$100-\$139**. On the lower end of the labor rate range, **7% of shops identified an average labor rate of \$100** while on the higher end, **3% of shops identified labor rates above \$200**. Additional average labor rate responses include: **\$140-\$159 (19%)**, **\$160-\$179 (12%)**, and **\$180-\$200 (9%)**.

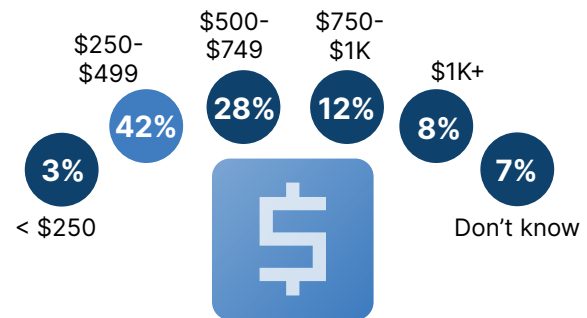


The average labor rate has continued to rise over the past few years but is still considerably lower than it needs to be or should be. This is contributing to the technician shortage, which will only deepen if we don't have more to offer future technicians."

Cecil Bullard
Founder & Chairman
of the Board,
The Institute for
Automotive Business
Excellence

Average repair order (ARO) value

A shop's average repair order – or ARO – provides a look at the value of each vehicle that pulls into that shop. Like labor rates, ARO differs based on types of repairs and specialties, but does provide a strong indicator of the overall health of the business. This year, ARO values ranged from less than \$250 to more than \$1,000. **The majority of participants identified their ARO value as \$250-\$499 (42%).** At the lower end of the range, **3% of shops identified their ARO as being under \$250** while **8% of respondents reported an ARO of \$1,000+.** Additional ARO responses included **\$500-\$749 (28%)** and **\$750-\$1,000 (12%).**



Nearly half have an ARO of **\$250-\$499**



These survey results largely mirror insights submitted by Ratchet+Wrench's reader base of over 91,000 shops nationwide in a 2024 survey. Similarly, there has been an increase in shops with labor rates of \$140 or higher, as more shops — 85% in our polling — raised their labor rates in 2024. **Two key factors appear to be driving success: the use of digital vehicle inspections and skilled service advisors effectively convert identified vehicle needs into billable work."**

Chris Jones

Group Editorial Director, EndeavorB2B's Vehicle Service & Repair Group

How to positively impact average repair order value?

When asked to select the top value drivers for ARO – or how shops increase ROs by providing increased value to the vehicle owners – participants were given a range of options, from Digital Vehicle Inspections to marketing & promotion campaigns, and identified the following services and programs (right) as ARO value drivers.



Digital vehicle inspections



Upselling and cross-selling services



Use of parts matrices



Use of labor matrix



Enhanced customer experience



Honorable mentions:

In addition to the top 5 ARO value drivers, shops also identified these services or programs as contributors to increased ARO: Digital estimate approvals via text or email, service advisor sales training, customer retention programs, marketing and promotions, offering comprehensive maintenance packages, strong customer experiences & relationships, and repair quality & expertise.



Across nearly 14,000 shops on Tekmetric's platform, we consistently see that **shops building transparency into their workflow achieve stronger average repair orders**. When customers can review detailed inspections and estimates digitally, approval rates rise. It's more about clarity and transparency than it is about upselling. Operational consistency and transparent communication ultimately translate into higher ARO and healthier margins."

Sunil Patel, CEO, Tekmetric



Looking to grow your shop profitability in a smart, thoughtful way that produces sustainable results? Click here to read: [Keys to Maximizing Your Shop's Profits](#).



Technology is now at the center of how modern auto repair shops operate. With many shops using a shop management system (SMS), these platforms have become essential for organizing workflow, communication, and customer service. As the industry becomes more tech-driven, understanding these tools is key to staying competitive.



The value of shop management solutions

Many shops today rely on a shop management system (SMS) to keep operations running smoothly. **According to our survey, the vast majority of shop respondents said they use an SMS.** Leveraging an SMS is one of the most important business decisions a shop can make, helping organize workflows, streamline communications, and provide data visibility to manage growth effectively. Many SMS providers also offer resources and training to help shops get the most from their investment.



While 96% of repair shops currently use a shop management system, I would estimate that **only about a third use the system to its full capacity.** When you consider that an SMS is the only tool in a shop that gets leveraged for every vehicle, underutilization creates one missed opportunity after another. Shops invest a ton in tools and equipment and do everything required to learn how to use the tools to repair a vehicle – an SMS should be no different.”

Jon Luttrell, GM, NAPA TRACS



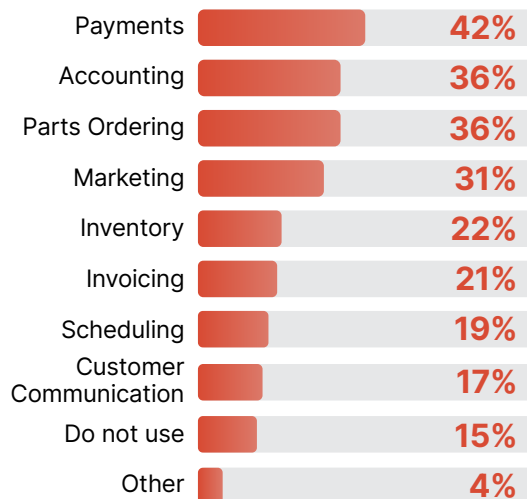


Today, more than ever, shops are up against standards put in place by other retail experiences that consumers engage with daily. They order their groceries at home, schedule doctor appointments well in advance, and use their phones for, well, pretty much everything. We are seeing shops come to us **seeking a more modern, customer-centric software provider to keep up with consumer expectations.** It's not just about being able to schedule an online appointment; it's about creating a long-lasting digital relationship with your customer base with tools that are easy to use for shop employees and vehicle owners."

Lukasz Konior, Product Marketing Manager, Shopmonkey

Other common software shops use

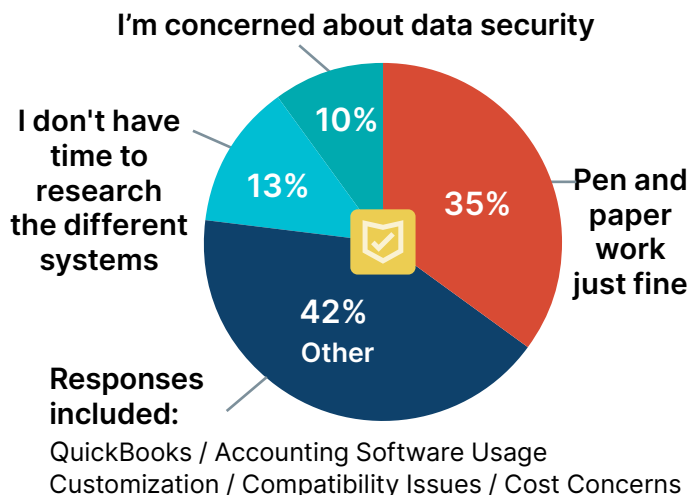
Many SMS platforms also integrate with other tools shops already use, such as accounting and payment software, which 36% and 42% of respondents reported using (below).



Curious what metrics you should be tracking with your SMS to target business growth? Click here to check out this resource: [Creating a Profit-Driven Team: The Metrics Your Auto Shop Needs to Track.](#)

Shops without an SMS

Most respondents that do not use an SMS said pen and paper still work for their business. Others identified time constraints, data security, compatibility or customization issues, and cost as reasons for not adopting an SMS.



**Respondents were given the opportunity to select multiple options and percentages will exceed 100%.*



A shop's parts ordering process can be a source of streamlined efficiency or, on the flip side, a driver of delays, inaccuracies, and dissatisfied customers. Beyond the system – or lack of a system – that goes into the parts ordering process, there are many other factors that impact parts ordering within the shop, including: Who orders the parts, who influences parts ordering decisions, which factors are most important for a shop when ordering parts, how the parts are actually ordered, and more.



Who orders parts?

The majority of this year's participants **identified the Service Writer or Advisor as the primary person responsible for parts ordering**. That said, most shops identified several people/roles within the repair facility that have some responsibility for parts ordering. In addition to service writers, participants also identified the **Shop Owner, Parts Manager, Shop Manager, and Technician** as the top participants in the parts ordering process.


50%
Service
writer/advisor


43%
Shop
owner


39%
Parts
manager


35%
Shop
manager


25%
Technician

4%
other



**Respondents were given the opportunity to select multiple options and percentages will exceed 100%.*

Who influences which parts are ordered?

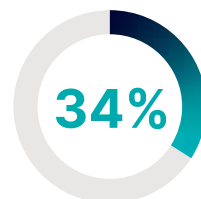
While the actual parts ordering process is most likely left up to the **Service Writer/Advisor** or **Shop Owner**, the majority of respondents identified the **Shop Owner** as influencing the parts ordering process the most. This is followed by the **Service Writer/Advisor** and the **Parts Manager**. Here is how this year's survey participants identified the people or roles within the repair shop who influence the types of parts their shop orders:



**Respondents were given the opportunity to select multiple options and percentages will exceed 100%.*

Most important factors when ordering parts?

From basic economics to delivery speed, countless factors impact the decisions and preferences that influence parts ordering. Survey participants identified **parts availability** as the most important factor driving parts ordering decisions.



More than a third of respondents – 34% – identified **parts availability** as the most important factor when ordering parts.



From what we've seen in talking to 500 technicians each month, **availability and price are consistently at the top when it comes to parts ordering decisions, especially in today's economic climate where inflation continues to shape how repair shops balance cost, quality, and turnaround time.**

Anthony Shaheen, Senior Analyst, IMR | Endeavor Business Intelligence



What methods does your shop use for ordering parts?

The ways shops order parts today have evolved significantly from the times of phone or fax machine, though those options still exist. In fact, **50% of survey respondents identified ordering directly over the phone** as one of the primary ways they order parts. But ordering by phone, while still common, is just one of the ways shops go about their parts procurement process. Based on our recent survey, a majority of respondents identified **Ordering Directly From Suppliers' Websites** as their most common practice, followed closely by **Ordering Through Software Solutions (parts aggregators)**.



While ordering parts sounds like it's a singular activity, shops know that a lot more goes into part sourcing than just a few clicks on the computer or picking up the phone: there's availability, order tracking, and more to consider every time an order is placed. When it comes down to the individual steps in the process, here's how our nearly 700 respondents broke down their process:

Primary methods for parts ordering activities

Activity	I use my aftermarket suppliers' or OE dealers' websites	I use my parts aggregator	I call my suppliers directly
Finding and comparing parts from multiple suppliers/dealers	216	437	46
Checking part availability and pricing	136	447	116
Placing orders with my aftermarket suppliers or OE dealers	136	413	150
Tracking order statuses and delivery times	165	238	296
Managing returns or warranty claims	170	177	352



Average number of parts suppliers and dealers

On average, this year's survey respondents said they **work with about 5.8 parts suppliers and dealers** for their parts ordering needs.



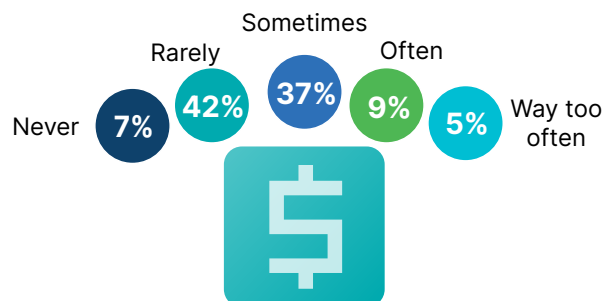
5.8



Curious how parts procurement tools impact shop operations? See how much inventory and revenue can be added back into your shop with our [ROI calculator here!](#)

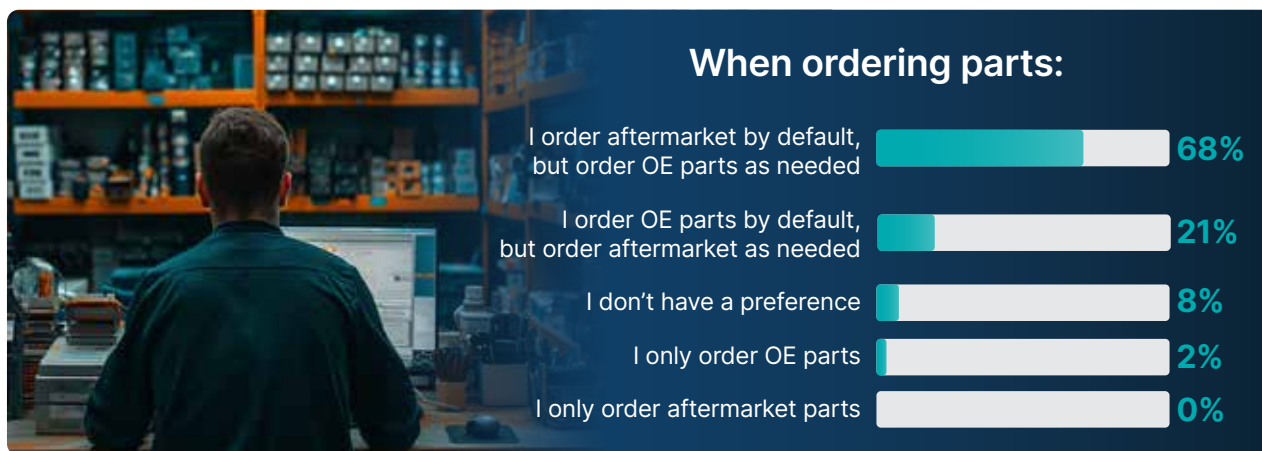
How often do customers question the cost of parts?

While it would have been reasonable to expect an increase in customers questioning parts costs, **42% of respondents said that customers rarely question the cost of parts** with **7% of respondents saying customers never question the cost of parts**. As for the rest of the respondents, **37% said customers sometimes question the price of parts**, **9% said customers often question the price of parts**, and **5% said customers question the cost of parts way too often**.



Part-type ordering

Another factor that impacts parts ordering decisions is part type – aftermarket or OE. Even though **68% of this year's respondents said they order aftermarket parts by default and OE as needed**, the full results suggest a reliance on both. **21% of respondents said they order OE by default and aftermarket as needed**, **2% of respondents said they only order OE parts**, and **8% expressed no preference**.



Parts procurement is more connected than ever before! Check out this webinar to get a solid understanding of where parts procurement is headed as shops push toward faster, connected, digital ordering experiences: [Scaling Smarter: Parts Procurement Trends Every Shop Owner Needs to Know](#)



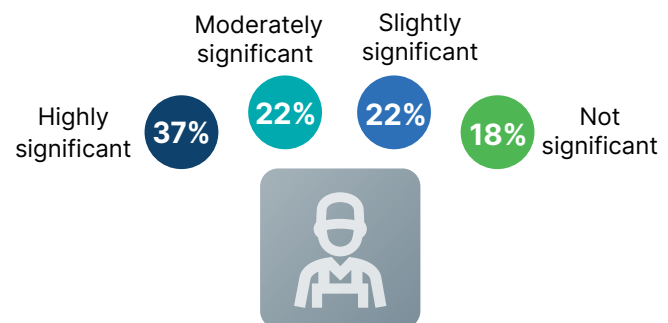
TECHNICIAN STAFFING

Across the industry, the technician shortage remains one of the most pressing obstacles for shop owners and managers. More than half of shop leaders say the impact is significant, and many are feeling the strain on both productivity and staffing. As the causes and pressures compound, shops are searching for sustainable ways to attract, retain, and develop talent.



How significant is the impact of the technician shortage on your shop?

Shops across the country continue to feel the impact of the industry's technician shortage. **More than half of shop owners and managers surveyed (59%) said the shortage has highly or moderately impacted their business.**



50+% say the technician shortage is highly to moderately significant.



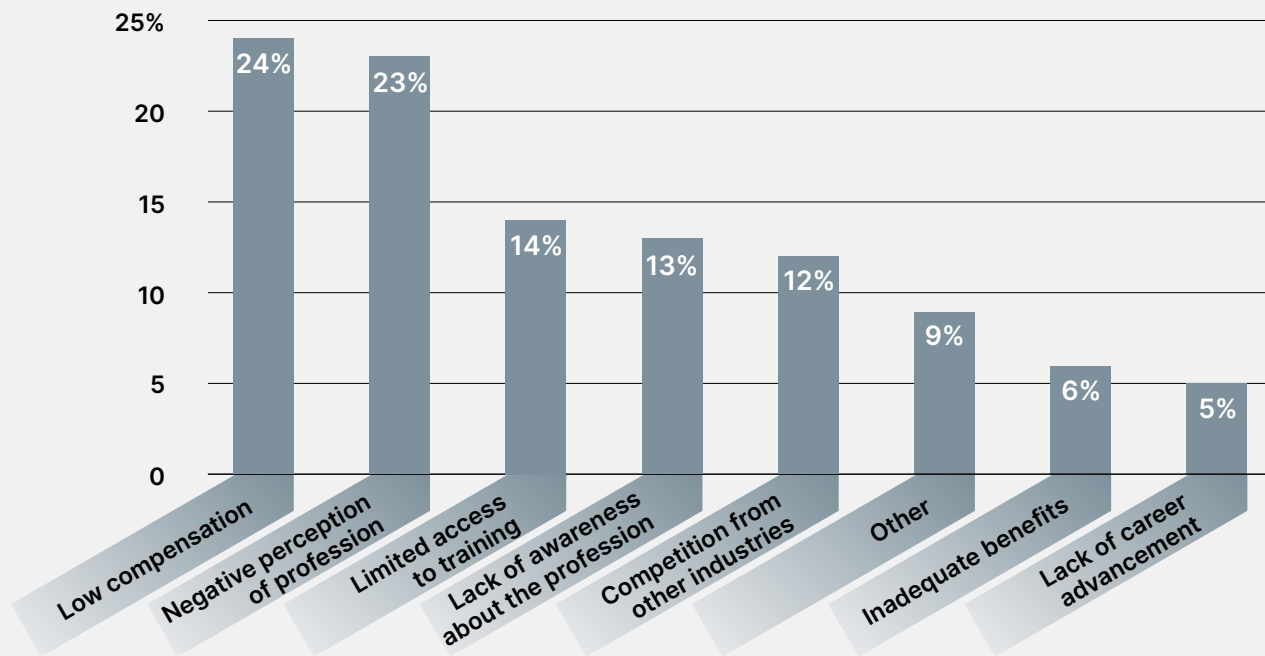
The technician shortage remains one of the most pressing challenges facing our industry, but the **shops that invest in developing career paths and supporting continuous learning are the ones seeing real progress.** Building connections between schools and shops, and creating mentorship opportunities for new techs, are essential steps to ensuring a sustainable workforce for the future.”

Mike Coley

President, ASE Education Foundation

**Due to rounding, percentages in this report may not total precisely 100%.*

Reasons for the technician shortage



When asked about the causes behind the shortage, responses varied, but several consistent themes emerged. **The top five reasons cited were low compensation (24%), a negative perception of the profession (23%), limited access to training (14%), lack of awareness about the profession (13%), and competition from other industries (12%).**

These responses show that the shortage is not driven by one issue alone but by a combination of workforce challenges, economic pressures, and the need for broader industry outreach. To reverse the trend, both the perception of the trade and the opportunities within it must evolve to attract new talent and keep experienced technicians engaged.

How can shops stay competitive in attracting and retaining talent?

Despite these challenges, many shops are finding ways to stay competitive and build strong teams. **Offering competitive wages remains the most effective strategy for both attracting and retaining technicians.**

**Respondents were given the opportunity to select multiple options and percentages will exceed 100%.*

TECHNICIAN STAFFING

Other leading tactics for addressing the technician shortage include **providing ongoing training and certification opportunities, offering flexible hours or promoting work-life balance, providing sign-on bonuses, offering enhanced benefits, and maintaining a positive work environment.**

Most effective strategies for attracting new technicians

-  Offering competitive wages
-  Providing ongoing training and certification opportunities
-  Offering flexible working hours

☆ Honorable mention

Offering enhanced benefits, including healthcare & retirement programs

Most effective strategies for retaining technicians

-  Offering competitive pay and benefits
-  Providing a positive work environment
-  Promoting work-life balance & offering training/certification opportunities

☆ Honorable mention

Providing sign-on & retention bonuses

Together, these responses highlight that competitive compensation and benefits matter, but culture and growth matter too. Technicians are drawn to workplaces that invest in them as individuals, not just as employees. A supportive environment that values learning, culture, and recognition creates a workplace where technicians want to stay long term.

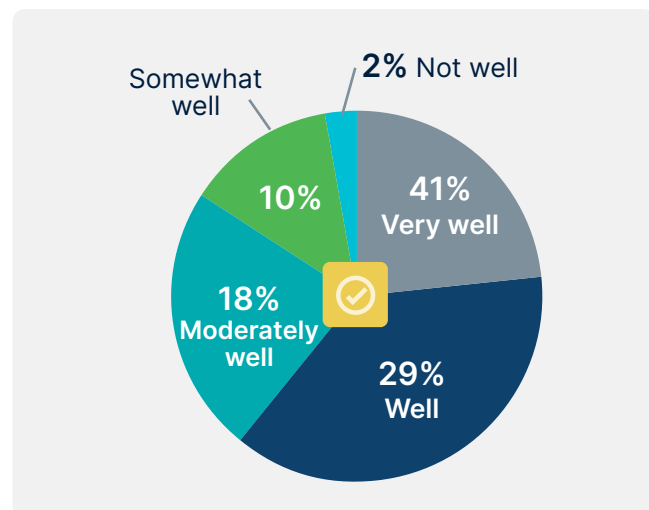


Flexibility and work-life balance are a big draw for attracting new technicians and boosting retention. See how one shop implemented the four-day work week!

Click here to read:

[Four Things Shop Owners Should Know About the Four-Day Work Week](#)

How well are shops retaining technicians?

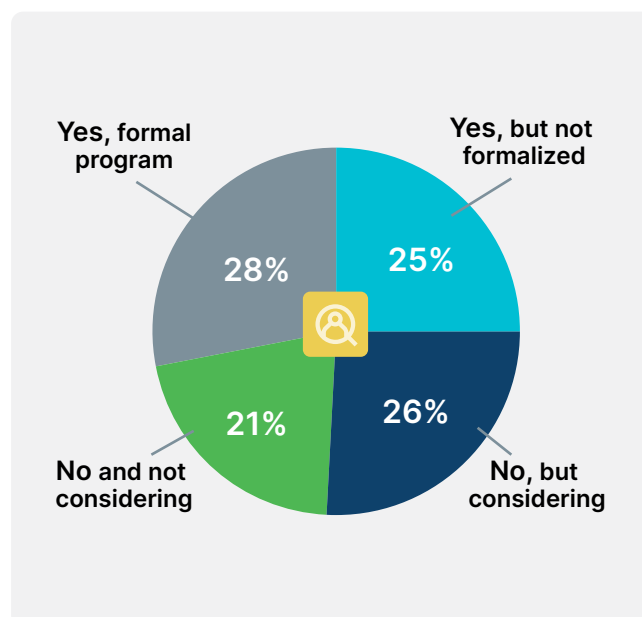


Even with the ongoing shortage, most shops report that they are doing relatively well at keeping their technicians. **A combined 70% said they have retained technicians well or very well**, suggesting that the strategies they are using to maintain their workforce are paying off.

Does your shop have an apprenticeship program for technicians?

This year, **53% of respondents said they have some form of apprenticeship program**. Of those with programs, **28% said they provide a formalized apprentice program**.

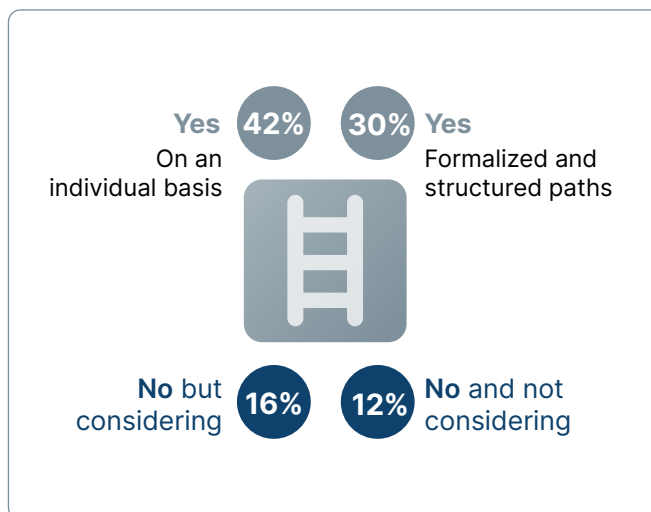
The uptick in these programs shows that more shops are taking a proactive approach to building their own pipeline of technicians. Apprenticeships help new technicians gain hands-on experience, while demonstrating the shop's investment in team development.



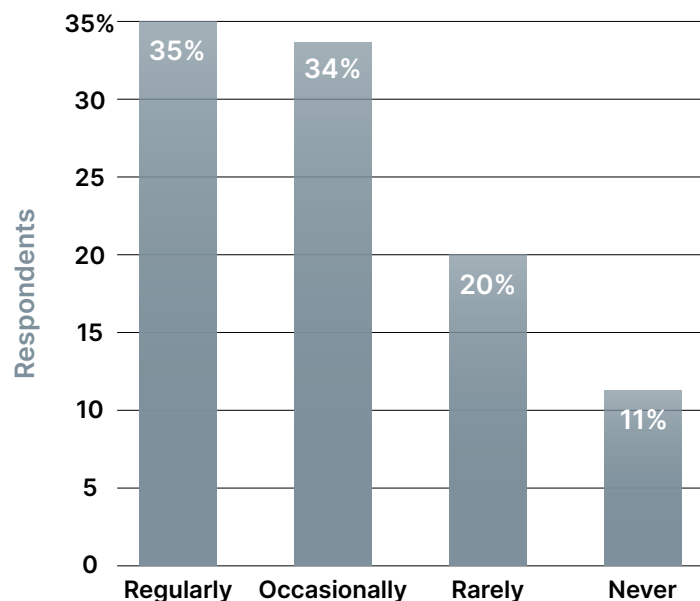
Want to learn more about the difference that mentorship makes in shops? Click here to read: [Cultivate Technician Talent: The Power of Mentorship in Auto Repair Shops](#)

Do you provide clear career path opportunities for your technicians?

Career growth opportunities also play a major role in technician satisfaction. In fact, **72% of surveyed shops provide clear career paths, and 30% of that report having structured and formalized career paths.** Another 16% said they do not currently have career pathing in place but are considering it. These programs can take many forms, from defined growth or promotion tracks to specialized training that supports advancement into diagnostic or management roles.



Do you discuss career advancement opportunities with your technicians?



In addition, **35% of shops said they regularly discuss career advancement with their technicians, while another 34% said those discussions happen occasionally. Together, nearly 70% of shops are making a point to talk with their technicians about career advancement and growth.** Altogether, this is a strong indicator that more shops recognize the connection between communication, engagement, and retention.

**Due to rounding, percentages in this report may not total precisely 100%.*

How can shops invest in their technicians?

When asked about the types of available career development opportunities within the shop, **61% of respondents said they provide advanced training and certification, while 57% said they encourage specialization in specific diagnostic or repair areas.**

Other responses include regular performance reviews, cross-training in different roles, and leadership or management training. These programs can improve both technician confidence and shop performance, ensuring that employees see a future within the business.

Top types of career development opportunities offered to technicians

- 1 Advanced training and certification
- 2 Specialization in specific repair/diagnostics areas
- 3 Regular performance reviews and feedback

☆ Honorable mentions

Cross-training in different roles
Leadership/management training

“Retaining (and developing) talent is often overlooked but is a key KPI for shop owners in today’s business climate. Although enrollment in trade schools is starting to show some growth indicators, these individuals won’t be productive members of the workforce immediately, and even when they begin their career in a shop environment it will take continued education and training for them to be equipped to fix today’s modern vehicles. **For IRFs to succeed in future years, they must retain and invest in their current and future staff as they are the lifeblood of the business.**”

Chris Messer, Executive Vice President, EndeavorB2B’s Transportation Division
Vehicle Service & Repair Group, Commercial Vehicle Group



Do you share financial information with your technicians to help them understand how their work impacts profitability?



74% Yes

26% No

Alongside these initiatives, transparency is also becoming more common. **This year, 74% of respondents said they share financial information with their technicians to help them understand how their work contributes to profitability.** Sharing this information not only helps technicians see the larger business picture but also reinforces trust and collaboration within the team.



Want to dive deeper into the benefits of sharing financial information with employees? Click here to check out the [Case for Financial Transparency with Your Auto Shop Employees.](#)

How do you expect the technician shortage to develop over the next 5 years?

46%

Expect it to worsen

36%

Expect it to improve

18%

Expect it to stay the same

Most shops believe the technician shortage will continue to challenge the industry. **Nearly half (46%) expect the shortage to worsen over the next five years, while 36% think it will improve and 18% believe it will remain about the same.** Regardless of how the trend develops, one thing remains clear: **Shops that invest in their people will be the ones best positioned to thrive.** The technician shortage may continue to test the industry, but the shops that focus on people and culture are the ones setting themselves up for long-term stability and success.



Regarding the technician shortage, a good place to start is by creating a workplace environment that attracts and retains quality people. While there may be a technician shortage, as an industry, we need to do a better job at providing above-market pay, benefits, and heavily invest in each employee. **Superstar technicians want more than a job; they want a career, which provides them with the right opportunities, incentives, and a secure future.**

Joe Marconi, Executive Council Member, Elite Worldwide

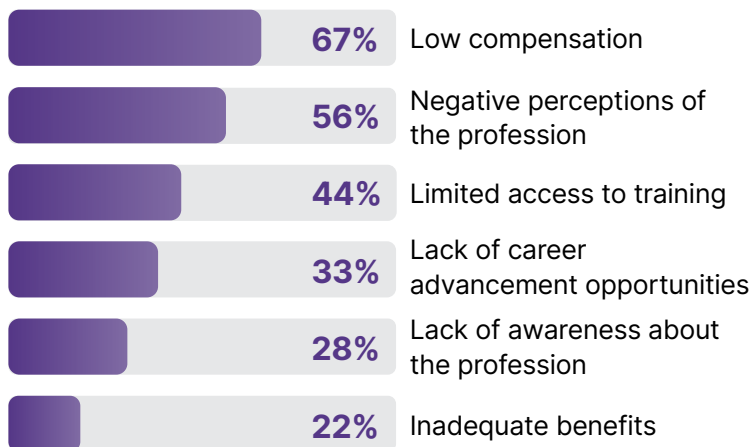


The technician shortage is being felt throughout the repair shop as well. See what techs surveyed had to say about the shortage and how it impacts their career outlook.



What do technicians believe is the primary reason for the shortage?

The majority of technicians surveyed report feeling the ongoing shortage in their daily work, with 89% saying it is at least slightly significant. When asked about the reasons behind the shortage, their responses align closely with what shop owners and managers reported: **low compensation, negative perceptions of the profession, limited access to training, and lack of career advancement opportunities.**



**Respondents were given the opportunity to select multiple options and percentages will exceed 100%.*



The shops that will thrive through the technician shortage are the ones that invest in people, not just paychecks.

When shop owners create cultures where techs feel valued, supported, and part of something bigger, they stop worrying about finding talent and start focusing on keeping it."

Darrin Barney
CEO, Elite Worldwide
Owner, Barney Brothers Off-Road and Repair,
Grand Junction, CO



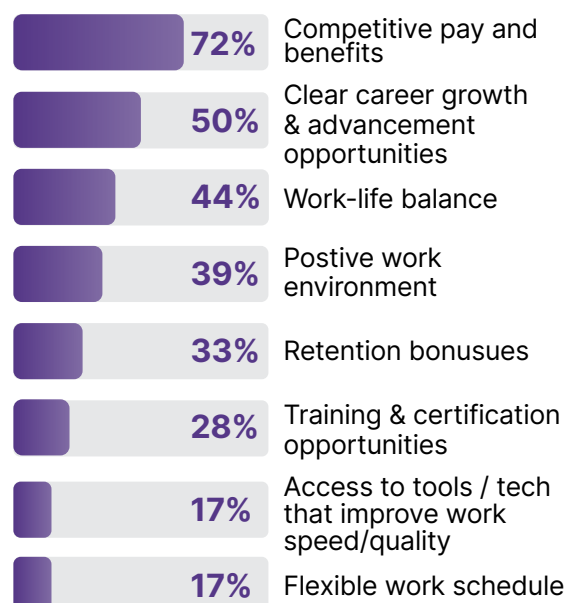
What keeps technicians engaged?

The factors that attracted technicians to their current shops include: **competitive wages (50%)**, followed by **ongoing training and certification (39%)** and **enhanced benefits (33%)**. Looking ahead, **72% said they plan to stay because of competitive pay and benefits**, 50% cited clear career growth, and 44% pointed to work-life balance.

What made you decide to join your shop as a technician?



Why do you plan on staying with your shop?



Today's technicians are not just turning wrenches; they are solving complex diagnostic puzzles every day. The technician shortage has pushed shops to value their techs more than ever, but it has also reminded us that **job satisfaction comes from being respected, having access to the right tools and training, and knowing that your expertise truly matters to the customer and the business.**

Matt Shepanek

Vice President, Credential Testing Programs-ASE
President, ASE Training Managers Council (ATMC)

**Respondents were given the opportunity to select multiple options and percentages will exceed 100%.*

Technician shortage & retention perspectives

	How significant is the technician shortage on daily work at your shop?	89%	Significant	50%	Slightly significant		
	What do you believe is the primary reason for the shortage?	67%	Low compensation	56%	Negative perceptions of the profession	44%	Limited access to training
	What made you decide to join your shop as a technician?	50%	Competitive wages	39%	Ongoing training and certification opportunities	33%	Enhanced benefits
	Why do you plan on staying with your shop?	72%	Competitive pay and benefits	50%	Clear career growth and advancement opportunities	44%	Work-life balance

*Respondents were given the opportunity to select multiple options and percentages will exceed 100%.

These results reinforce that **competitive compensation, training, advancement opportunities, and supportive environments** can help address the shortage while also keeping technicians committed.



Want to read more about the technician perspective? Click here to read: [What Auto Technicians Wish Shop Owners Knew: Insights from the Repair Bay](#)



CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD

When asked to identify the biggest challenges they expect to face, **economic uncertainty ranked first**, followed by parts pricing, the training required for increasingly complex vehicles, limited access to repair information, and the ongoing technician shortage.



Biggest challenge you expect to face in the next five years?



1. Economic Uncertainty



2. Parts Pricing



3. Right to repair



4. Training



5. Tech shortage

These concerns reflect a mix of external and internal pressures, such as:

- Inflation
- Evolving vehicle technology
- Legislation
- Staffing
- Operational efficiency

However, within all of those concerns, there are opportunities and steps shops can take to strengthen their businesses.

Where do shops want to improve?

When asked what they would most like to improve, shop owners and managers shared a wide range of responses that centered on five recurring themes:



Benefits &
work-life balance



Shop growth



Profit



Technology



Workflow or process
improvements



Workflow improvements stood out as the most common focus for improvement.

Specific workflow improvements include:

- Communication
- Shop organization/cleanliness
- Scheduling management
- Parts availability
- Improved training
- Stronger customer engagement

A Checklist for Implementing Operational Improvements

Realistically, shop performance can't be addressed with a single change overnight. It requires consistent and deliberate actions to support team productivity, customer loyalty, and operational resiliency. The following checklist outlines practical improvements identified in this report that shops can implement to strengthen workflows and build towards long-term stability.



People & Culture

Invest in ongoing technician training

Provide continuous education to help technicians evolve with vehicle technology and repair standards. Well-trained technicians work more efficiently, reduce rework, and feel confident in their roles.

Improve work-life balance

Adopt scheduling practices that reduce burnout, such as flexible hours or realistic workload expectations.

Offer clear career growth paths

Define advancement opportunities so employees understand how they can grow within the organization. Clear progression encourages engagement and long-term commitment.

Provide fair pay, benefits, and flexibility

Competitive compensation, benefits, and flexible scheduling remain some of the most effective ways to retain talent.



Communication & Customer Experience

Prioritize internal communication

Ensure teams understand expectations, priorities, and changes in workflow. Strong communication reduces errors and keeps operations running smoothly.

Improve customer education and transparency

Clearly explain repairs, timelines, and costs to customers. Educated customers are more likely to trust recommendations and return for future service.

Optimize shop management systems for communication

Use software to improve scheduling, workflow visibility, and job tracking. This helps automate communication while also reducing bottlenecks and improving overall efficiency.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AHEAD



Technology & Tools

Streamline parts procurement with modern platforms

Leverage parts procurement tools to improve parts availability, accuracy, and ordering speed.

Invest in technology that reduces operational stress

Identify areas where technology can support your business, and identify solutions to address those needs, including shop management systems, procurement solutions, financial software, customer communication/reminders, and/or shop marketing software.



Financial Alignment

Practice transparent financial communication

Consider sharing high-level financial insights with your team so they understand how efficiency, productivity, and customer service impact profitability.

Help employees see the bigger picture

When teams understand how their work contributes to the shop's overall performance and goals, they are more motivated to operate efficiently and take ownership of outcomes.





FINAL THOUGHTS

Thank you for reading this year's U.S. General Auto Repair Shop Survey Report. We hope this report provides useful insights into the current state of the industry and helps you make informed decisions for your shop. **We greatly appreciate everyone who participated in the survey and shared their perspectives and insights.** Your input continues to provide valuable visibility into the trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping the automotive repair industry.

As the industry evolves, **investing in people, processes, education, and technology remains key to sustaining growth, improving efficiency, and delivering exceptional service to customers.** We look forward to sharing more insights in the future and continuing to support shops across the country in navigating the opportunities ahead.