

News Release

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For Immediate Release

How to attract the next generation of talent to the bodyshop

The refinish industry’s skills shortage is a problem plaguing European bodyshop owners, with regional research indicating that many are fearful it will become a full-blown crisis. Jim Muse, Axalta’s Vice President of Refinish for Europe, Middle East and Africa, says to overcome a skills crisis the industry must position the profession as a career for the digitally savvy and environmentally aware.

Basel, Switzerland – 15 October 2019 – The refinish industry is under strain from a shortage in skilled labour. Lack of interest from younger generations and an ageing labour force are widely thought to be the main culprits, and while stopping time or halting the aging process are impossible, there is a solution.

“To reverse the dwindling interest in the profession amongst young people we have to give the image of the refinisher’s job a much-needed makeover,” says Jim Muse, Axalta’s Vice President of Refinish for the Europe, Middle East and Africa. “Innovations in technology mean the profession today is as digital as it is manual, and it is increasingly environmentally aware.”

Going digital

For many years, refinish work was a static affair, particularly when colour-matching was done with microfiche and then with traditional colour chips. Thanks to rapid developments in technology, the process is now swiftly and accurately carried out in modern bodyshops with advanced digital systems supported by digital colour-matching

tools, giving refinishers complete mobility in the bodyshop. In a Cloud-based, fully digital colour-management system, refinishers can access features like spectrophotometer readings, job sheets and colour formulas, wirelessly, from any Internet enabled device, such as a smartphone or a tablet, anywhere in the bodyshop.

“Gone are the days of being tied to a PC, having to find colour matches by hand to create spray out cards,” Muse continues. “Innovation in technology means that the car paint repair process is becoming faster, easier and more profitable. The digital tools in today’s bodyshop make sense to the younger generation of tech-savvy jobseekers.”

Connect with Gen Z

Bodyshop owners typically want to attract the so-called Generation Z - those born between 1995 and 2014, the oldest of whom are now entering the workforce. This is a sizeable cohort, which by 2020 is predicted to comprise nearly a quarter of the world’s workforce. A recent survey¹ of more than 12,000 Generation Z across 17 different countries revealed that 80% aspire to work with cutting-edge technology and 91% state that technology would influence job choice.

“The key to reversing the skills shortage is to demonstrate to Gen Z that our industry is an attractive alternative to other professions. Gen Z are true digital natives with a stronger environmental mindset than any of their predecessors. They have grown up in a digital world and to them, technology is second nature. In order to hit the right note with this pool of jobseekers, bodyshop owners need to incorporate messages of digitisation and environmental sustainability in their job fair displays and in communication with counsellors at trade schools, for example,” says Muse.

What the future holds

Businesses of all sizes and across all industries are realising that sustainability and green thinking must be part of their agenda. “We know many bodyshops have their own sustainability goals. They choose product application systems that reduce their impact on the environment, including usage of low energy products that can aid in reducing their carbon footprint. Now, bodyshops have to go one step further and ensure this green thinking coupled with their digital credentials are on display for the next generation,” Muse says.

¹ <https://www.delltechnologies.com/content/dam/digitalassets/active/en/unauth/sales-documents/solutions/gen-z-the-future-has-arrived-executive-summary.pdf>

The refinish industry has work to do to ensure that today's skills shortage doesn't become tomorrow's skills crisis. Bodyshop owners must reverse the tide and draw in new talent by emphasising the right points of the profession to young jobseekers. But as Muse concludes, once hired, the work continues, "Retention ultimately becomes the goal because a strong sense of job satisfaction is a universal requirement for employee retention at any age."

For more information about Axalta Refinish, please visit

www.refinish.axalta.eu.

About Axalta Refinish

Axalta Refinish - part of Axalta, a leading global company focused solely on coatings – is a valued, reliable global paint repair partner to our customers, who demand nothing short of total customer satisfaction. We give them confidence in our fast, efficient, high-quality coating technologies and integrated digital business processes, making the entire paint repair journey faster, easier and more profitable. With more than 150 years of experience in the coatings industry, our dedication to innovation and our constantly-developing technology means we offer our customers an unlimited colour choice for perfect colour matches. Most importantly, we work tirelessly to anticipate our customers' needs so they can address the challenges they face every day. We have an impressive portfolio of brands for every bodyshop requirement, for every segment of the market, and for every level of market maturity. For more information visit

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