



MOTORPRO



DRIVING



THE



FUTURE



SPECIAL
ISSUE

THE KEY ROLE OF TALENT IN THE AUTOMOTIVE REVOLUTION



Access Denied? Bosch Secure Diagnostic Access (SDA) is the answer!

Bosch SDA provides access to vehicle manufacturer-protected systems, via a one-time registration. With over 25 vehicle manufacturers (and increasing) already included at no additional cost, SDA is the key!
A compatible KTS and ESI[tronic] subscription are required.

www.boschaftermarket.co.uk



TRADING PLACES

Trade deals and tariffs have become everyday terms for many people in recent weeks as the news is flooded with updates on how the US will do business with other nations. The US remains one of the most important automotive export markets and the trade deal that reduced tariffs to 10% delivered much-needed certainty for UK businesses.

But market access is only one aspect of automotive's current challenges. The enormous skills gap threatens the UK's ability to keep pace with change and remain competitive, and the government is aware of that.

Data from the IMI has been cited multiple times during automotive debates by MPs from across the House, echoing the IMI's call for targeted investment in apprenticeships, technical training and reskilling, all of which are critical to ensure the sector is future-ready.

It's hoped that the government's long-awaited Industrial Strategy will place the automotive sector at the heart of the UK's growth agenda, but alongside R&D, trade and energy policies, workforce development must be a central pillar.

This is why the IMI continues to provide government with trusted, evidence-based insight that informs and supports good decision-making, grounded in the real experiences of employers across the sector. With the right support to develop the skills pipeline, the UK-US trade agreement could unlock long-term prosperity for the sector and the communities it supports.

Head to p28 to find out more about the IMI's priorities for the automotive sector and its new *Driving the Future of Automotive Professionals* manifesto



Autotech
GROUP

Pioneering PEOPLE, SKILLS & TECHNOLOGY solutions

Autotech Recruit: Immediate access to experienced contract vehicle technicians and MOT testers

Autotech Training: Top-rated IMI training, including EV and ADAS technologies

Autotech Academy: Opportunities to recruit the next generation of workshop talent

Autotech Connect: Cutting-edge wearable technology to boost team efficiency and productivity

GET IN TOUCH TODAY!

T: 01234 240503

E: hello@autotechgroup.co.uk

autotechgroup.co.uk



RECRUIT

TRAINING

ACADEMY

CONNECT

WE KEEP THE WORLD MOVING

LANE SHIFT

Attracting new talent is the key to automotive's success but it demands a fresh approach and real commitment

IS YOUR BUSINESS equipped with the talent it needs to thrive in a fast-changing automotive landscape?

From autonomous vehicles to AI and direct-to-consumer sales, disruptive technologies are transforming the sector. But while the pace of innovation accelerates, our talent strategies risk falling behind. To futureproof our industry, we must rethink how to attract and recruit people, especially from underrepresented groups.

The data tells a clear story: according to exclusive IMI research, women make up just 24.5% of the workforce in car and light vehicle sales, which totals more than 175,000 people. In the maintenance and repair sector, the gap is even wider, with women representing just 13.8% of the 270,000-strong workforce. Even in areas where the balance is slightly better, such as motor vehicle parts and accessories retail, women still only account for 27% of the approximately 37,000 employees.

This isn't just a diversity issue, it's a business imperative. A sector crying out for new skills can't afford to ignore half the population.

And we know the talent is out there. Just look at some of the outstanding women recognised at this year's IMI Awards: Becky Pearce of Dick Lovett Bristol BMW, who was named

Apprentice of the Year; Sue Robinson, Chief Executive of the National Franchised Dealers Association, who received the Sue Brownson Award; and IMI Bursary winner Teagan Whiteman from Fix Auto, who was an IMI Bursary winner and Skills Competition standout, and is now in line to represent the UK at WorldSkills 2026.

BOLD STEPS NEEDED

However, recognition is not enough. Employers should be taking bold steps to create inclusive cultures that support all employees – especially women. That means serious consideration of workplace policies around menopause, menstrual health and flexible working.

Too many talented individuals leave the industry because their needs aren't being met, so we need environments where everyone can thrive throughout their careers. And that starts with levelling the playing field.

At the IMI, we are committed to tackling this challenge head-on. Attracting and recruiting new talent isn't just a priority, it's a central pillar of our policy manifesto. We are working closely with industry, education providers and government to ensure that the sector is accessible, welcoming and built for the future. Our goal is to open the doors to new people and

perspectives, creating a workforce that truly reflects the society it serves.

The automotive industry is evolving so our approach to people must evolve with it. The talent is there so let's bring it in and make sure it stays. Join us as we lead the charge and help the IMI shape a more inclusive, skilled and sustainable future for the automotive sector.

Sarah Whiteside-Jones is the IMI's Director of Membership Engagement and Public Affairs

Read the latest IMI research and stay on top of the biggest automotive trends at bit.ly/IMI-Research

If you have a question for the IMI, email james.scoltock@thinkpublishing.co.uk

“ATTRACTING AND RECRUITING NEW TALENT ISN'T JUST A PRIORITY, IT'S A CENTRAL PILLAR OF OUR POLICY MANIFESTO”





CONTENTS



ACCELERATE YOUR CAREER IN AUTOMOTIVE ISSUE 33

08 How IMI membership powers the automotive industry

Whether it's attracting and recruiting staff, retaining and progressing employees or preparing for future skills, your membership helps the IMI support everyone in automotive

10 Skills revolution

Following exclusive new IMI labour market data that highlights the changing nature of auto skills, *MotorPro* reveals how this will impact future recruitment practices

16 Ten in ten

Stay up to date with the stories you may have missed, including the latest EV research and Amazon's Škoda showroom

FUTURE SKILLS

18 Stay cybersecure

Dive into the critical world of cyber-security and discover why it's something you need to know about whether you're in the workshop or the showroom

20 Inside a centre

Find out how Mission Motorsport is developing ex-military talent for a successful career in automotive and read the first-hand success stories of those swapping uniforms for overalls



COMMUNITY

26 The generation game

We chat with two stars of automotive who have forged very different career paths: Sue Robinson, Chief Executive of the National Franchised Dealers Association, and Becky Pearce, IMI Apprentice of the Year

28 Manifesto for success

Discover how the IMI manifesto will help keep the government on track and ensure the automotive sector gets the support and recognition it deserves

30 Motorvational skills

Go inside the Automechanika Motorvate event to see how the IMI and the wider industry is connecting people with the future of the sector

36 The IMI community

The latest news and updates from your IMI and our thoughts go to out the families of IMI members who have passed away

ATTRACTION

38 Opportunity knocks

A governmental shift away from welfare benefits could be an opportunity for automotive to bring more talent into the workforce. *MotorPro* talks to First Step Trust to find out how the sector can help its people succeed

42 Funding the future

Discover how last year's recipients of The Fellowship of the Motor Industry and IMI Bursaries used the funds to give their careers a head start

INDUSTRY TRENDS

44 Big interview

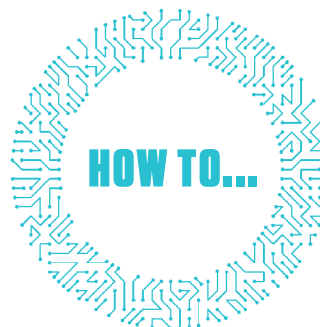
IMI President Jim Saker explains why the IMI Manifesto is a key turning point for the organisation and its members

46 Skills of tomorrow

Get inside the Kia EV3 and discover how the company is upskilling its technicians as it pushes for an electrified future

66 My motoring inspiration

Find out how IMI member David Cheadle's indirect route into automotive set him up for an incredibly successful career specialising in Japanese cars



59 The How-to section

- _ Make job adverts stand out
- _ Help staff fulfil their potential
- _ Understand how AI is changing the workshop
- _ Invest in the right diagnostic tools

The IMI

Fanshaws, Brickendon,
Hertford, SG13 8PQ
Tel: 01992 511521

—
MotorPro © 2025
ISSN: 1742 5204

Published on behalf of the IMI by:
Think Media Group, 65 Riding House
Street, London, W1W 7EH
Tel: 020 3771 7200

Editor

James Scoltock
james.scoltock@thinkpublishing.co.uk

Art Director

Ken Davidson

Managing Editor

Sam Upton

Content Development Director

Matthew Rock

Executive Director

Jackie Scully

Advertising

Tom Crane
020 3771 7260
tom.crane@thinkpublishing.co.uk



Opinions expressed in articles do not necessarily represent those of the Institute of the Motor Industry. The publishers cannot accept responsibility for claims made by manufacturers, contributors, advertisers or readers.

—
Printed by Acorn Web,
Normanton, Yorkshire.



HOW YOUR IMI MEMBERSHIP POWERS AUTOMOTIVE

As an IMI member, you are part of a vibrant community of automotive professionals. It not only offers access to the best resources to help you succeed but empowers the IMI to make positive changes in the sector for everyone

ATTRACT AND RECRUIT

01

Supporting the Armed Forces

The IMI has signed the Armed Forces Covenant, committing to support the Armed Forces community. The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise that those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces and their families are treated with fairness and respect in society. By signing the Covenant, the IMI has committed to being an Armed Forces-friendly organisation and supporting those transitioning from military to civilian careers.



As part of that promise, the IMI has made a number of pledges:

- Promote the recruitment of veterans, reservists and military spouses in the automotive industry.
- Recognise and translate military qualifications and experience into professional membership-qualifying criteria.
- Provide careers support for veterans entering the automotive industry through its online hub.
- Represent the interests of the Armed Forces community in discussions with government, industry regulators and training bodies.
- Collaborate with the Ministry of Defence, Career Transition Partnership and other relevant agencies to align automotive sector needs with Armed Forces skills.

—
To find out more about the Armed Forces Covenant and how the IMI is helping those transitioning from the military to the automotive industry with Mission Motorsport, go to p20.

RETAIN AND PROGRESS

02

Make the most of the IMI Professional Register

There's a lot of competition out there, so setting yourself up for success is crucial. Give yourself an edge and get on the IMI Professional Register.

The IMI Register is an industry-wide list featuring individuals in the sector recognised for their experience, professionalism and commitment to ethical working practices, as well as having up-to-date knowledge and skills. It could prove invaluable by enhancing your career prospects and professional development.

Actively leveraging your status on the IMI Professional Register will help you maximise its benefits, and is something you can do in five simple steps:

1. **Network and build credibility and trust**
2. **Promote your professional status**
3. **Engage with the IMI**
4. **Stay compliant and keep learning**
5. **Enhance your career and attract customers**

The IMI Professional Register is a powerful career tool. By actively promoting your status, engaging with the IMI and continuing your professional development, you can unlock new opportunities, strengthen your reputation and achieve greater career success.

—
To find out more about the IMI Professional Register, go to bit.ly/IMI-Professional-Register

FUTURE SKILLS

03

A greater focus on all automotive

The IMI welcomes Skills England's call for reform, but we're determined there should be a greater focus on automotive to help the sector and our members succeed. The IMI is urging the body and government to:

- Ensure the forthcoming Industrial Strategy and growth and skills offer includes the whole automotive ecosystem, not just manufacturing.
- Prioritise the creation of shorter, stackable apprenticeship pathways and bolt-on training modules that reflect real-world training needs in areas such as battery safety, high-voltage systems and autonomous technologies.
- Expand the use of flexible delivery models such as the IMI and WMG's Further Education Lecturer Reservists (FELR). This allows professionals to deliver technical training without leaving the industry.
- Address the barriers faced by SMEs, who struggle with the complexity of apprenticeship funding, administrative burden and the inflexibility of programme duration.
- Recognise the urgent shortfall in ADAS-qualified technicians. Just 2% of the current workforce holds the required credentials, while ADAS-equipped vehicles already make up one in five vehicles on UK roads.

The IMI is ready to support Skills England in building a responsive, inclusive and future-ready skills system that recognises and reflects the entire automotive landscape.

—
Stay up to date with IMI policy news at bit.ly/IMI-Policy

GET CONNECTED

IMI Connect is your personalised member dashboard that gives you access to all the tools and resources you need for work, life and leisure, all in one place.

Log in to access member benefits, from rewards and discounts such as the Careers Hub and Automotive Intelligence to help you navigate through the industry and succeed in every aspect of your work and personal life.

Log in to your IMI Connect account at bit.ly/IMI-Connect



YOUR PROFESSIONAL HOME FOR LIFE

- We champion automotive professionals through recognition and representation
- We connect like-minded members through engaged networks
- We support our members' career ambitions and aspirations
- We make our members' lives easier by helping them save money

Find out more about taking advantage of all aspects of your IMI membership at theimi.org.uk/membership

A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing an orange t-shirt and black overalls, is using a VR headset. She is holding a small black tool in her right hand. In the background, a dark-colored car is visible on a yellow lift in a factory setting.

JOIN THE REVOLUTION

Exclusive new IMI data highlights the scale of automotive's shift and the new skills every company will need to have. MotorPro reveals these new skills and how to boost them in your business

WORDS_ GRAHAME PELLIS FIMI AND JAMES SCOLTOCK

01 AUTOMOTIVE'S PIVOTAL JUNCTURE

The sector faces significant challenges, but with these challenges come big opportunities. Exclusive IMI research shows that automotive consistently ranks among the industries with the highest vacancy rates, only recently falling out of the top two. The latest data shows there are 17,000 vacancies in the industry, which isn't good at a time of seismic change.

The industry is undergoing a technological revolution driven by the transition to electric vehicles and advances in automation. With government policies supporting these shifts, the number of certified EV technicians has surged, while the adoption of autonomous driving technology is expected to grow rapidly. By 2032, nearly half of all UK vehicles are predicted to feature Level 2 autonomy.

Automotive's future is also marked by an increasing demand for new skill sets, particularly in areas such as data science and AI. But there is also continued demand for traditional roles, with the call for technicians and valeters remaining strong according to the IMI's Labour Market Report.

With so much happening in automotive and the huge range of skills needed, aligning business needs with the right recruitment strategies will be pivotal.



02 A DIVERSIFYING VEHICLE PARC

There are over 40 million vehicles on the UK's roads, encompassing trucks, buses, vans and cars. As this parc grows, so does the diverse number of technologies needed to power it, underpinning the requirement to bring in specialists with the skills to maintain and service these vehicles.

According to SMMT data, new car registrations back in 2014 for alternative fuel vehicles stood at just 51,843. Fast forward to 2024 and that number has grown to over 810,000, despite the new registration market shrinking overall.

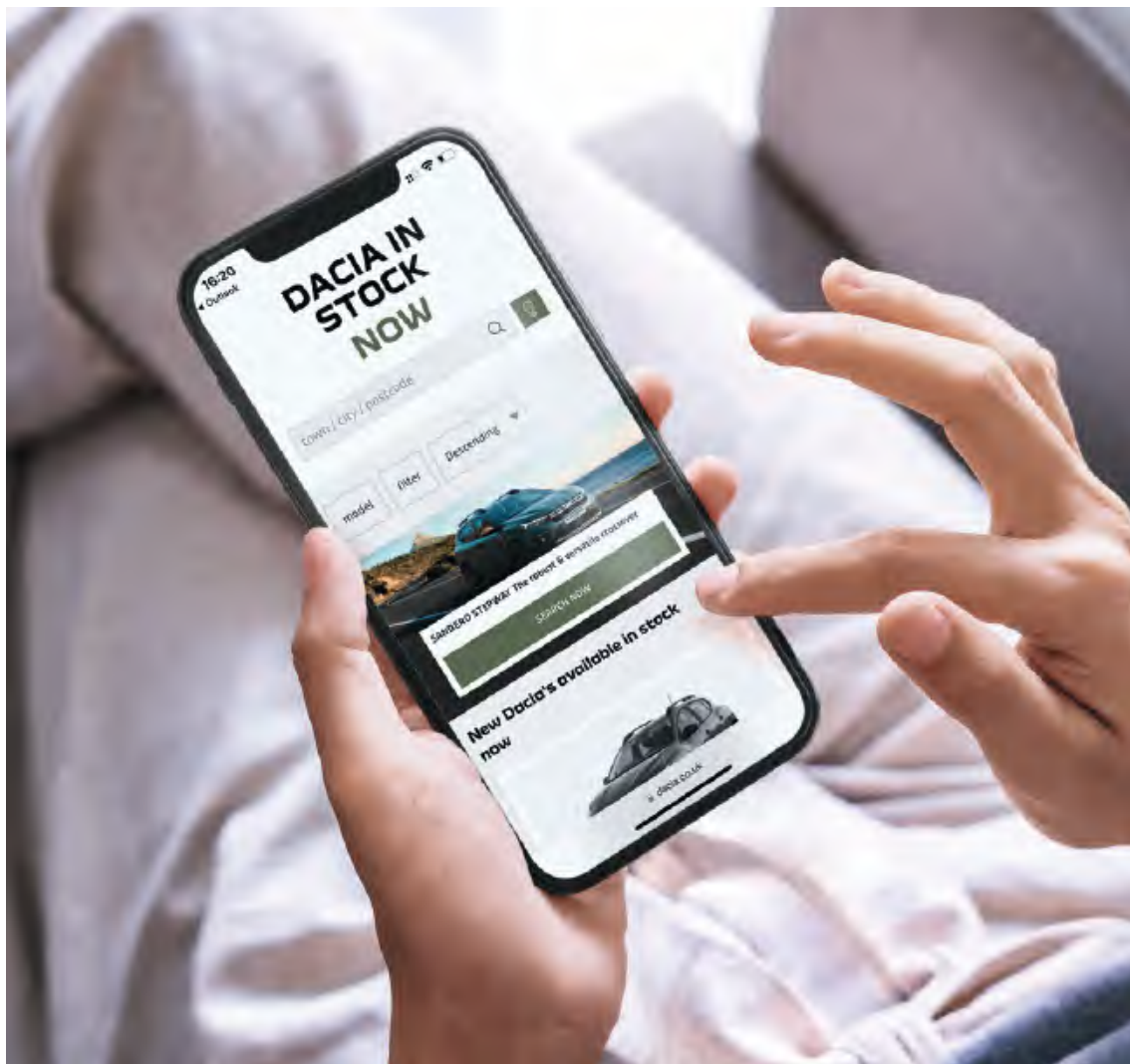
Whether it's plug-in hybrids, hybrid electric vehicles or battery electric cars, there is a definite shift happening; when combined, these alternative fuel vehicles comprise 40% of the market. This proportion will continue to grow and doesn't even include future technologies such as hydrogen.

However, propulsion is just part of the picture. Research shows that connected and autonomous technology is increasing, with 68.7% of new cars available with adaptive cruise control and 80% integrating some type of advanced driver assistance system (ADAS). And we're only at the beginning of the journey for ADAS and autonomous technology. That means more embedded sensors, onboard computer power and growing requirements for servicing and maintenance as the market matures.

Diversification in the vehicle parc reinforces IMI research that suggests as the automotive sector evolves, the need for omniscient and specialist technicians will grow. While omniscient technicians will be crucial for general maintenance across various vehicle types, specialists will provide focused expertise in areas such as EV technology and ADAS. >

The new face of auto: The industry is experiencing an increasing demand for skills in ADAS, EVs, AI and analytics





Bot stuff: David Hawksworth, Customer Engagement Director at Autotrader (below) is a true AI convert

03 DIGITALISING SALES

Retail needs to get to grips with the latest tools to leverage results as the consumer vehicle buying journey evolves. Walking into a dealership is often the last part of that journey according to David Hawksworth, Customer Engagement Director at Autotrader, while bringing in people who are confident using AI is key to success.

“Five years ago, we talked about consumers being digital-first in their approach to car buying, but today we say they are digital by default. They turn up to retailers expecting to walk in and buy the car they have been researching online for 40-50 days.

“But when they ring the dealership, they take you right back to the start of that journey. The majority of retailers treat this as a tech problem, rather than a harmonisation problem between tech and people. Customers are hungry to learn, data-savvy and want information. They are digital natives when it comes to data.

And that’s where tools such as AI could help out.

“We have a tool called Co-Driver, but you could use ChatGPT or other AI tools. When you run a vehicle through Co-Driver for a short description it’s more insightful. It talks about features such as towing capacity, load space and seats that have an immediate impact on buyer engagement, especially at nine o’clock when the dealership’s shut. When you advertise things badly, leads are generally questions such as how many keys has it got, has it got heated seats, has it got all the stuff you could tell them about in the advert?”

“I’ve been working with a couple of retailer groups who are focused on delivering a response to every single lead, be it call, email or chat within two minutes. And they are using technology to do this when the retailer’s both open and closed, with dramatic effect. The AI bot closes more appointments and test drives than their best salesperson.”



“CUSTOMERS ARE HUNGRY TO LEARN, DATA-SAVVY AND WANT INFORMATION. THEY ARE DIGITAL NATIVES WHEN IT COMES TO DATA”

04 NEW MOBILITY'S IMPACT ON SKILLS

A shift towards electrified and connected vehicles is making many companies think differently about how they serve the market. Jameel Motors recently helped launch the Farizon SV – a Chinese-made all-electric large van – into the UK market, and Sujai Sugathan, Head of Aftersales is working hard to ensure the company has the staff and skills to meet changing demands.

“We’re using data analytics to predict future trends, particularly when it comes to Farizon and how businesses and fleets will increasingly transition to electric mobility,” he says. “We’re also tracking changes in consumer demand for convenience and digital integration, with omnichannel sales experiences replacing traditional interactions.

“A targeted approach to upskilling employees for electrification, connection, digital tools and shifting client expectations is necessary in the dynamic aftermarket. This includes mapping current skills against future needs for roles like EV servicing and digital customer engagement, investing in EV, digital tools and OEM-specific training, as well as utilising on-the-job training, e-learning modules and VR simulations.

“I feel it’s vital to encourage continuous learning to empower staff, such as providing regular updates on new vehicle technologies, repair procedures and industry best practices through newsletters and online resources.

“We also look for adaptability, curiosity and digital fluency throughout the hiring process, and collaborate with training institutions

and certifying bodies to hire the best talent. Creating meaningful career paths and rewarding upskilling through recognition and mentorship is key to staff progression as the aftermarket landscape continues to change.

“Showcasing the cutting-edge role the aftermarket sector plays in innovation, including EV and autonomous tech, is one way we attract the best talent. Taking the Farizon SV van as an example, it’s packed full of tech and innovation, from its cell-to-pack battery packaging to its drive-by-wire technology. Working with such a forward-looking brand enables Jameel Motors to attract candidates.

“Also important is highlighting a clear route to career progression, from entry-level roles to specialised, management and entrepreneurial positions. We actively seek diverse candidates with varied skills, which includes fostering an inclusive environment for women. We use captivating job descriptions, staff testimonials and virtual events to establish a lively online presence. We also look to offer apprenticeships and internships. Instead of just shadowing, we offer real, paid experiences to ensure exposure to real-life on-the-job experience. A clear path to employment is also crucial for attracting talent.

“Smart, electrified, connected vehicles such as the Farizon SV are transforming the aftermarket and require a significant shift in managing people, skills and future readiness. This includes educating employees in data diagnostics, software, electronics and high-voltage safety.”



“SHOWCASING THE CUTTING-EDGE ROLE THE AFTERMARKET SECTOR PLAYS IN INNOVATION IS ONE WAY WE ATTRACT THE BEST TALENT”



Future thinker:
(Above) Sujai Sugathan, Head of Aftersales at Jameel Motors is a firm believer in targeted training

05 CHANGING APPROACHES IN THE WORKSHOP

Far from the traditional tech-free oil-stained workshops people expected decades ago, workshops are transforming into modern cutting-edge facilities. Here are five technologies driving this shift and the new approaches to recruitment designed to find the talent with the skills to use them.

WEARABLE TECH

Companies are starting to develop wearable systems aimed directly at technicians. Smart glasses can display instructions, cutting lists and torque settings right in front of your eyes, while leaving your hands free to get on with the job. They can also be used to take notes or record work as it's being done.

CAMERAS

Camera systems are now being built into alignment and crash repair equipment, helping to spot faults, assess tyre wear and make the repair and servicing process smoother and more accurate. Automated record keeping can also be seamlessly transferred between front-of-house and back-office functions.

SPRAY GUNS

New technology is helping to smooth out the process, making it easier for new technicians to produce better, quicker and more consistent finishes. It may not replace traditional skills and experience, but it could give more junior painters a boost by seeing better results faster.

INCREMENTAL SHEET FORMING

Using robotic arms to stretch and form metal sheets into complex shapes could really shake up the world of restoration. In the future, you could scan a damaged car panel, send off the scan and get an exact replica sent back to you, ready to fit. If this technology continues to move forward, it could save hours of skilled labour and open up high-quality restoration work to more people.

ROBOT WELDERS

Automated welding systems are becoming smaller, more affordable and easier to use. The programming has been simplified, often using point-and-touch methods that most people can get the hang of with a bit of training. While these systems are not quite at the stage where they can weld directly onto a car in a typical workshop, they are proving useful for vehicle modifications and restoration work, especially when it comes to repetitive or time-consuming tasks.

LASER WELDERS

This specialist equipment has been around for a while, but prices are starting to drop and they are now found in more everyday workshops. These machines produce cleaner welds than MIG, with less heat and distortion, which can be a real bonus when working on thinner or more delicate materials. They are also relatively straightforward to operate, which makes them easier to introduce into busy environments.



“IT’S NOT THE VEHICLES THAT WILL DRIVE THE NEXT ERA OF MOBILITY, IT’S THE PEOPLE”



Light fantastic: Laser welders can be found in many small workshops thanks to cleaner cuts and lower costs



06 THE ENGINE OF THE REVOLUTION

Talent isn't just about filling vacancies, it's about closing the gaps in skills, confidence and opportunity. Simon King, CEO at Autotech Group, thinks the real disruption lies not in the vehicles but the readiness of the workforce to keep pace with developing technology.

"Building a future-ready workforce starts with how we welcome new talent into the sector," he explains. "While newly qualified vehicle technicians may have the technical knowledge, they are still new to the workplace and real-life repair environments. To succeed, they need more than a job, they need structured, supported entry points that include mentoring and real-world experience.

"Employers must be willing to invest time. A short period of guidance can be the difference between retaining promising individuals or losing them to other industries. These early experiences shape confidence and long-term commitment. In a sector already facing an acute skills shortage, we cannot afford to let this talent slip away.

"Creating visible training pathways also plays a critical role. When new entrants can see the potential for ongoing development and clear career progression, the industry becomes a far more attractive destination. These aren't just roles, they are stepping stones to becoming the next generation of automotive specialists.

"To truly prepare for the road ahead, the sector must also embrace technology as a workforce enabler, rather than just a tool for diagnostics. The demands of modern vehicles are increasingly complex and often outpace traditional repair methods.

"Technological innovations such as Assisted Reality headsets allow for real-time, hands-free

People person: Simon King, CEO at Autotech Group (below left), believes people are the key to automotive's successful future

collaboration between workshop technicians and remote experts, improving diagnostic accuracy, speeding up repair times and reducing repeat visits. These tools also help retain vital expertise by enabling retiring technicians to remain in the trade as mentors and create more inclusive working environments by supporting neurodiverse technicians and automating time-consuming admin tasks.

"While long-term workforce strategies are essential, we must also face the immediate reality that many businesses continue to operate under intense staffing pressure. Used strategically, temporary roles provide the flexibility to manage demand, avoid costly downtime and maintain continuity. A scalable, agile workforce isn't a short-term fix, it's a necessary part of modern workforce planning.

"The future of the automotive sector won't be decided by technology alone, but by how well we prepare our people to meet it. From new entrants to experienced professionals, developing, supporting and empowering talent must be at the centre of every strategy. Because it's not the vehicles that will drive the next era of mobility, it's the people." ■

Stay ahead of changes in the industry with IMI Research at bit.ly/IMI-Research



"A SHORT PERIOD OF GUIDANCE CAN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RETAINING PROMISING INDIVIDUALS OR LOSING THEM TO OTHER INDUSTRIES"

TENINTEN

01 / VOLVO'S BUSINESS LEADER OF THE YEAR

Volvo Car UK Managing Director, Nicole Melillo Shaw, has been recognised as Business Leader of the Year by *Automotive Management*. Judges praised her approachable style and leadership during the company's transformation to a direct-to-consumer business model, saying, "She is known for her accessibility to employees at all levels of the organisation, fostering a culture of openness and empowerment."



02 / SCANIA ACQUIRES FRANCHISE PARTNER HAYDOCK

Scania has taken a step further in securing the Swedish OEM's UK dealer and service network, with the acquisition of Haydock Commercial Vehicles. The deal will see Haydock's six branches located in the North West – Warrington, Preston, Ellesmere Port, Widnes and Deeside – and its teams join forces with the company.



03 / DAIMLER TRUCK WORKSHOPS PIONEER NEW RATING SCHEME

Daimler Truck has helped develop a new Maintenance Provision Rating Scheme (MPRS) to improve industry standards in workshops. Working with Logistics UK, RHA, CPT, IRTE, SMMT, BVRLA and NFDA, and backed by the Office of the Traffic Commissioner, DVSA and DfT, Daimler hope MPRS will help operators make informed decisions about fleet maintenance based on service quality. Every Daimler Truck dealer will have an MPRS rating by the end of 2025.

04 / FASTER CHARGING COULD SPEED UP EV ADOPTION

Almost three-quarters of motorists say they would switch to an electric car that offered 250 miles of range from five minutes of charging, according to research from Startline Motor Finance. With BYD recently unveiling technology that could deliver such innovation, Startline's report found that 36% of respondents say it's almost as fast as refuelling with petrol, with 34% saying it would mean they wouldn't need a home charger. This shift to faster charging could dramatically accelerate EV adoption.



05 / DIAMONDS ARE FOREVER

Automotive supplier Bosch is investing in synthetic diamonds as a solution for future mobility. The technology helps power quantum sensors that could enable more robust navigation in the future, working alongside conventional GPS systems. Working with synthetic diamond leader Element Six, Bosch will set up the Bosch Quantum Sensing division to develop the technology.



06 / AMAZON DELIVERS... ŠKODAS

Škoda has become the first European automotive brand to have an Amazon car showroom that integrates real-time new car stock availability. Through this new venture with the global online retailer, UK customers can browse the full Škoda range, check local availability, request a test drive and explore finance options – all before visiting a Škoda retailer to make a purchase and enjoy a personal 'Click to Drive' experience.



07 / KIA VANS PREPARE FOR AN ALL-ELECTRIC FUTURE

Kia UK has revealed its Platform Beyond Vehicle (PBV) commercial vehicle plans for 2025. With the introduction of the first PBV vehicles – the all-electric PV5 Cargo van and PV5 Passenger van – a dedicated, brand new dealer network to supply sales, aftersales and servicing will be established, with 50 PBV centres to open at launch, quickly rising to 60.

08 / MINI HELPS RAISE MONEY FOR CHILDREN IN CRISIS

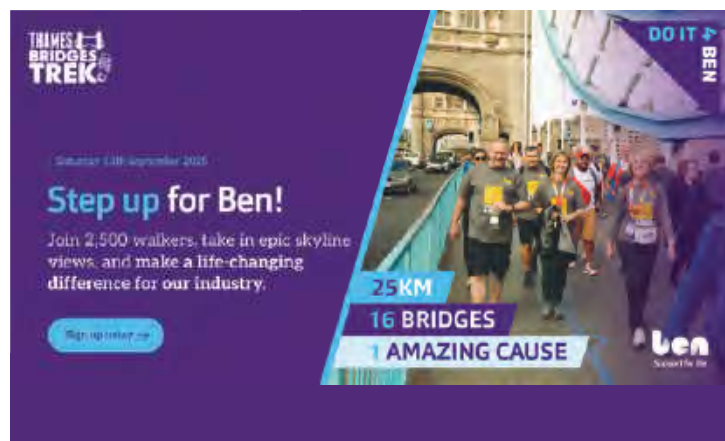
MINI hit the road to raise much-needed funds for Buttle UK, a charity dedicated to helping children and young people across the UK who are facing financial hardship and challenging social issues. Driving from MINI Plant Oxford to BMW Group Plant Swindon, 120 MINIs took part in a charity road rally, marking the fifth consecutive year MINI Plant Oxford has supported the charity.



09 / STEP OUT TO SUPPORT BEN

Automotive charity Ben is asking people to put on their walking shoes to help raise money and continue its support for people in the sector. Sign up to the Thames Bridges Trek and join a community of 2,500 people on a 25km adventure across 16 of London's most iconic bridges in September. If you are in Scotland then head to Edinburgh for Kiltwalk 2025 and raise money on a four-, 11- or 20-mile walk.

Find out more at ben.org.uk/get-involved/do-it-4-ben



10 / ASTON MARTIN SIGNS THE ARMED FORCES COVENANT

Aston Martin has formally pledged its support to the Armed Forces community by signing the Armed Forces Covenant as part of its wider EDI strategy. The covenant is a promise to those who serve or have served in the Armed Forces and their families that they are treated with fairness and respect, and that Aston Martin is committed to being an Armed Forces-friendly employer and supporting those transitioning from military to civilian careers.

Five cybersecurity trends

We reveal how connected car security is driving change across the sector

WORDS_NEIL KENNETT

1. Consumer concerns

In a recent survey of 2,000 UK motorists by Digidentity, a digital identity platform owned by Solera, 79% backed more stringent regulation of car data access. A further 64% reported feeling a lack of control over how their vehicle's data is protected, with the figure higher still among EV owners.

Noting that two-thirds of new cars sold in the UK are now connected, Digidentity's Chief Technology Officer, Marcel Wendt, said: "Modern vehicles are rapidly becoming mobile data hubs, storing everything from location and driving habits to personal preferences. Our survey shows that drivers are concerned about how their data is managed and they expect garages to be more transparent about their data security measures. This is an opportunity for the automotive industry to build trust with customers by prioritising data protection alongside traditional factors such as price and service quality."

Handily, Digidentity is the approved Trust Centre for the SERMI (Security-Related Vehicle Repair and Maintenance Information) Association.

2. Security clearance

Initially launched to standardise access to security-related data for programming keys and unlocking immobilisers, Stuart James of the Independent Garage Association describes SERMI as "invaluable to the automotive sector".

Importantly, it is now mandated by EU Delegated Regulation 2021/1244 in Europe and includes the requirement for independent operators and their employees to be "approved and authorised" to use it.

In 2023, a new framework was agreed by the European Automobile Manufacturers' Association (ACEA) and a number of independent sector organisations including the European Council for Motor Trades and Repairs (CECRA) and the European Federation of Automotive Aftermarket Distributors (FIGIEFA).

The UK is aligned on a voluntary basis and the scheme will be delivered here by RMI Standards and Certification (RMISC) on a not-for-profit basis. With the requirement of £1m public liability insurance, a SERMI certificate will be valid for five years and is audited by RMISC site inspections.

"OUR TECHNICIANS AREN'T GOING TO BE TAKING OUT A GEARBOX OR CHANGING A CLUTCH, SO WE FOCUS ON HIGH-LEVEL ELECTRONIC SYSTEMS"

“IT CONCERNS ME WHEN PEOPLE TALK ABOUT BYPASSING SECURITY. THERE SHOULD BE NO BYPASS”

3. Remote access

Remote diagnostics providers, including those using the Jifeline network, are already incorporating the new SERMI requirements into their processes. One such company, the Wirral-based Core Diagnostics, has recently had its Core Academy approved as an IMI Training Centre. As well as offering the Hybrid and Electric Vehicle Combined Course Level 2 & 3 and AOM230 for ADAS calibration qualifications, it has worked closely with the IMI to create bespoke remote technician accreditation.

“Training is an ongoing issue for everybody in the aftermarket,” says Neil Hilton, Technical Sales Director at Core. “We have developed our own remote diagnostic technician course, which is accredited by the IMI. We are currently the only company in the UK to have this course accredited. The course offers the NVQ Level 3 Digital Support Technician qualification, with carefully selected e-learning and an endpoint assessment delivered in partnership with Wirral Metropolitan College. Our technicians aren’t going to be taking out a gearbox or changing a clutch, so we strip all that out and focus on high-level electronic systems, which is exactly what the market needs.”

4. Gen Z skills

While the ‘digital native’ concept has been criticised for assuming digital literacy, Hilton states that the company are increasingly turning to Generation Z for digital skills.

“The profile of our team often surprises people,” he says. “They expect a lot of Master Techs in their mid-40s, which was our initial direction. The problem was that they usually came from a particular dealer – fantastic on one brand but it took a lot of training to get them up to speed on everything else.

“When our MD, Mark Fleming, started taking his teenage son out on ADAS and programming jobs, he noticed how incredibly quickly he picked everything up. Now we employ a lot more young people, sometimes just out of school. They are generally very sharp, eager to learn and have been brought up in a digital environment, so have no fear of these systems. They also tend not to have preconceptions and carry no baggage from years in the trade.”

5. No bypass

As well as skilled authorised users, another vital element in robust cybersecurity is great systems and data protections. “We use OE equipment so don’t experience any issues,” says Hilton. “It concerns me when people talk about bypassing security. There should be no bypass. If there is, you have to question the legality of any work after this point.

“On-demand remote diagnostic support is our primary focus, which makes an enormous difference. We continually operate at 50% capacity, which enables us to deliver a maximum response time of 30 seconds. Some providers have to physically plug a main dealer tool into a local unit, but we have all the OE equipment already connected in the server room. Each technician has a keypad with the different brands ready to go, which streamlines the process.

“We have backup systems, both on-site and in the cloud, so even if one system goes down we can be back up and running very quickly.”

MISSION: POSSIBLE

WORDS_JOHN CHALLEN

IMAGES_WILL AMLOT

Rebuilding your life and career after serious injury or illness can be a daunting prospect. But Mission Motorsport makes recovery easier by supporting and training ex-service people to become a new generation of technicians





W

HEN IT WAS ESTABLISHED IN 2012, Mission Motorsport dared to be different. It chose the option of giving an opportunity to people who faced an uncertain future. Since those early days, the charity has broadened its offer and there are countless stories of graduates who have forged

successful careers in the UK's motor industry.

"We started out with just wounded, injured and sick service leavers," explains Workshop Manager Aston Dimmock, who has been with the charity since it started. "And that has been extended to all service leavers, with our wider Mission Automotive programme."

Offering training at IMI Levels 2, 3 and 4, covering both vehicle and component modules, Mission Motorsport carefully curates the courses to meet the needs of its trainees, fully aware of their specific needs.

Along the way, Mission Motorsport has forged very strong relationships with car manufacturers such as JLR, Stellantis and Lotus. "We've directed around 1,500 people into the Jaguar Land Rover scheme," says Dimmock, "while Stellantis is offering free training and guaranteed interviews for any of our beneficiaries."

When qualified, graduates are able to go into a wide range of automotive environments, whether it's a manufacturing facility, showroom or workshop. One thing that's especially rewarding for Dimmock is the feedback that he and his colleagues get from service leavers who have passed their Mission Motorsport training and gone on to thrive in the automotive industry.

"There are learners who have told us that their involvement with us has genuinely saved them," he says. "We've picked up and taken on some people from very dark places and bought them through."

Two specific Mission Motorsport success stories are Steven Skakle and Laurence Roke. While Skakle is currently going through training, Roke has successfully navigated the system and is now making a name for himself in the motor industry. These are just two of the hundreds of lives that have been changed for the better thanks to one charity and a team of dedicated people who give others a way back into civilian life. >



Military precision: Steven Skakle (left) has transferred his knowledge and skills to the auto industry



STEVEN'S STORY

Steven Skakle first got involved with Mission Motorsport when he attended one of its recovery courses. He's now on his way to gaining vital qualifications that will help him in the future.

"I was placed at Tedworth House in Wiltshire and my main ambition was to achieve a mechanics qualification. I'm currently studying for a Level 3 Diploma in Light Vehicle Maintenance and it's been a fantastic experience so far.

"The reason I chose the course was because I've always had a keen interest in cars and the automotive industry in general. Once I left the Army, what I really wanted to do was to become a vehicle mechanic and Mission Motorsport offered me a fantastic opportunity to fulfil my dream.

"If I'm honest, I don't think I've come across a challenging part of the course. Part of that might be because I have prior knowledge of the topic, but also because I have a strong desire and determination to learn and pass the course.

"The most rewarding part of the training has been all the extra information that Aston has passed on to me, drawing from his own experience and knowledge. He really goes into depth and makes every lesson enjoyable. One of the biggest lessons I've learned is not to second guess and stick with my first answer when faced with a problem. There's a lot to be said for going with your gut instinct.

"ONCE I LEFT THE ARMY, I WANTED TO BECOME A VEHICLE MECHANIC AND MISSION MOTORSPORT OFFERED ME A FANTASTIC OPPORTUNITY TO FULFIL MY DREAM"



“During my time at Mission Motorsport, I’ve learned a lot of technical skills that I never would have had if I hadn’t taken the course. Diagnostics is the key skill I’ll take away from this experience because it’s one of the most important skills that’s used in all sorts of garages around the country.

“The biggest lesson I’ve learned in the classroom environment is the ability to listen to the whole class before we come to a conclusion about a situation or problem that needs to be solved.

“When I complete my training, I hope to carry on working as a full-time mechanic, build up my portfolio and gain more auto qualifications, because it’s important to keep learning. My advice to anyone who gets the chance to attend any of the Mission Motorsport courses would be to grab the opportunity with both hands. The courses have a great atmosphere and all members of staff are very friendly and willing to help in any situation.” >

**“THE BIGGEST
LESSON I’VE
LEARNED
IS THAT I’M
STILL USEFUL
TO SOCIETY
AND HAVE A
LOT TO OFFER”**



LAURENCE'S STORY

Laurence Roke was diagnosed with advanced cancer while serving in the Royal Navy, which resulted in a number of tumours in his liver and the removal of both testicles.

"During a two-and-a-half-year battle with cancer, I had a gap of about three months where the Royal Navy gave me opportunities to recover physically and mentally. One of those opportunities was a track day event at Goodwood where I met Mission Motorsport CEO James Cameron, who wanted to find out about me and how my treatment was going. He invited me to become a beneficiary of Mission Motorsport and a year later I was enrolled onto the IMI Level 3 Light Vehicle Maintenance and Repair, IMI Level 3 Air Con, and IMI Level 2 EV courses.

"The most challenging part of my training was learning the theory behind electrical fault diagnosis, as I found out that I'd been doing some of it wrong for a long time. The most rewarding part was being Second Mechanic for the Mission Motorsport race car at the Race of Remembrance, and then racing a year later.

"Since completing the courses, I have gained a lot of confidence and I'm now an associate with the IMI with my membership and qualifications.

"The biggest lesson I've learned is that I'm still useful to society and have a lot to offer. After leaving Mission Motorsport, I spent two years with Jaguar Land Rover and I'm now an AA Roadside Technician, helping people who have broken down. This job gives me everything I need and everything I miss from the military: being a part of something, an element of danger, being on the side of busy roads, helping others in need and fixing vehicles.

"Since being medically discharged from the Forces, the AA has given me my identity back, as well as a real sense of purpose and pride. The tasks I face in my job require me to think on my feet, adapt, improvise and overcome many problems that go beyond just a breakdown. For example, I now help customers feel calm and in safe hands, and make sure they get to where they need to be.

"A lot of me had been lost when I was medically discharged from the Navy, but Mission Motorsport helped me regain everything and allowed me to see where I could go with my new qualifications. I will be forever grateful to them."

"THE BIGGEST LESSON I'VE LEARNED IS THAT I'M STILL USEFUL TO SOCIETY AND HAVE A LOT TO OFFER"



Winning smile: Laurence Roke took three courses with Mission Motorsport and is now an AA Roadside Technician

Discover how to become an approved IMI centre and help train the auto professionals of the future by going to bit.ly/IMI-Approved-Centre

THE IMI'S CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR THE ARMED FORCES



As part of this year's Automechanika Motorvate event, the IMI signed the Armed Forces Covenant that shows its commitment to the military community.

By putting pen to paper, the IMI is determined to recognise the value that serving personnel, reservists, veterans and military families bring to the automotive industry and the country.

The IMI will promote the Armed Forces Covenant to IMI members and encourage them to implement its values within their own businesses, while actively highlighting the value of the skills of the Armed Forces in the automotive sector through campaigns, newsletters and case studies.

By signing the covenant, the IMI also promises to promote the recruitment of veterans, reservists and military spouses in the automotive industry and recognise and translate military qualifications and

experience into professional membership-qualifying criteria.

And for those moving into the sector, the IMI will provide careers support through its online hub to support veterans entering the automotive industry.

To make sure veterans can progress, the IMI will also offer discounted membership, CPD and training courses to veterans to support their automotive careers, and provide resources and mentoring opportunities to support reskilling or entering the profession.

To ensure the Armed Forces community is correctly represented at the highest level, the IMI will highlight their interests in discussions with government, industry regulators and training bodies, and collaborate with the Ministry of Defence, Career Transition Partnership and other agencies to align the automotive sector's needs with military skills. ■



Commitment ceremony:
(Main image) Tony Lawson,
IMI Commercial Director
(centre) joins Mission
Motorsport CEO James
Cameron (left) and a senior
representative of the Armed
Forces for the signing of the
Armed Forces Covenant (above)

THE GENERATION GAME

MotorPro talks to Becky Pearce, IMI Apprentice of the Year, and Sue Robinson, CEO of the National Franchised Dealers Association, to discover their very different experiences of the industry

WORDS_JAMES SCOLTOCK



THE LIST OF DIFFERENT CAREERS in automotive is long and varied, but the routes into the sector are equally diverse. You only have to talk to two of the sector's stars to find out how everyone's journey through the industry is different. But while the two women have very different career paths, they both agree that automotive has a pull that few other industries can match.

Sue Robinson is Chief Executive of the National Franchised Dealers Association, as well as the current IMI Sue Brownson Award Winner, which recognises outstanding leadership in the industry.

Meanwhile, Becky Pearce is the IMI's Apprentice of the Year and just starting her automotive journey.

Pearce joined vehicle retailer Dick Lovett in Bristol as an Apprentice Vehicle Technician in 2019, establishing herself as a standout talent. Deeply passionate about the motor industry, she's already laid the foundations for an incredibly successful career, having passed her EPA with distinction and winning BMW Vehicle Technician Apprentice of the Year in 2024.

Now a fully qualified technician, Pearce also mentors others, helping them to achieve their goals.



"I WANTED TO BE WORKING ON CARS, NOT LOOKING AT THE MATHS AND SCIENCE BEHIND THEM"



Women of substance: (far left and inset) Becky Pearce and (left) Sue Robinson have found fulfilment and enjoyment in their careers, winning IMI Awards in the process

ROUTES TO SUCCESS

The two women's journeys into the sector were very different. For Robinson, hers was an academic route followed by a career in the building industry.

"I did a degree in sociology and social science," she explains, "then a PhD in criminology. I actually did a study into prostitution in the inner-city area of Birmingham, so nothing to do with the auto trade. I then went into various media and policy jobs in the building industry before moving into automotive as a press and policy officer. Automotive became incredibly seductive and the rest is this history."

Pearce's route was a little more direct and intentional, but still had the odd diversion. "I grew up in a scrap yard and farm with cars," she remembers. "I also raced, but at school I looked towards childcare as a career – the complete opposite to automotive. However, I didn't enjoy it anywhere as much as I enjoyed working on cars."

After school, Pearce signed up to Wiltshire College for a two-year motorsport engineering course, but studying the same topic at university wasn't what she wanted to do.

"I didn't enjoy the academic side as much as the practical," she says. "I wanted to be working on cars, not looking at the maths and science

behind them. A friend at college recommended an apprenticeship at Dick Lovett, so I went to the open day, did a week's work experience and absolutely loved it."

OPEN TO ALL

In automotive, Robinson and Pearce are working in an industry that they both love, but understand that the sector needs to do more to highlight just how much it has to offer. If it doesn't, it won't attract the talent it desperately needs.

"We do a lot of work in encouraging people to enter the automotive industry at all levels," says Robinson. "There's a vast array of jobs available that people don't even realise exist. I've been to some dealerships and their social media areas are like a Google office. We've been quite poor in getting that message across, which results in people not recognising the wide range of jobs in the industry."

While automotive could do more to shout about the opportunities available, there's also a lack of understanding among those who can influence the careers of a new generation, whether that's parents, carers or teachers. Pearce's experience is representative of a lot of talent.

"School was pushing me towards sixth form college and university," she says. "I chose that route but always preferred the hands-on practical work. So I didn't finish the course, left after six months, and was more open to an apprenticeship."

That shift in learning approach paid off and has put her in a good position to push on with her career, especially with so much happening in the industry. While Pearce admits she prefers working on combustion technology, she's preparing for the future, having recently studied for her Level 4 hybrid qualification.

"THERE'S A VAST ARRAY OF JOBS AVAILABLE THAT PEOPLE DON'T EVEN REALISE EXIST"

"The training is there for us and I love going to the academy," she says. "The technical knowledge is absolutely amazing and I always come away having learned something."

THE FUTURE'S BRIGHT

Pearce's eagerness to continue learning is a good sign, especially as Robinson sees electrification as one of the industry's biggest challenges. However, it's not the only thing that excites her about the future of the auto sector.

"There are so many changes," she says. "There's electrification and the increasing number of Chinese EV models, which will have an impact on a lot of dealers taking on franchises from Chinese manufacturers. This will change a lot of the landscape, including encouraging more women into the industry and more women to gain senior roles."

Attracting more female talent into the industry is important as no one can deny the sector is very male-dominated. But if automotive is to succeed, it needs to bring people in from all backgrounds – something Pearce is experiencing first-hand.

"We're seeing a lot more women in the industry," she says, "which is great. I started off as the first female apprentice here and there are four of us now. We've had one every year, which is fantastic to see."

Automotive is an incredibly varied sector and Robinson and Pearce highlight how two people can have very different but equally exciting careers. The message just needs to be heard by more people to make sure it continues to attract award-winning talent. ■

Listen to the full *MotorPro* podcast with Becky Pearce and Sue Robinson at bit.ly/IMI-Talking-Point-Podcast

A MANIFESTO FOR CHANGE

As automotive moves towards a bold new future, the latest IMI manifesto outlines how to support automotive professionals and solve the UK automotive skills crisis

WORDS_JAMES SCOLTOCK



THERE ARE ENORMOUS changes happening in automotive, not only with the technologies coming online but the skills needed to support them. To meet these demands, the sector desperately needs to attract new talent to the sector and ensure that those who are already part of the community are ready for everything the future brings.

As part of its commitment to tackling the UK's automotive skills crisis, the IMI has launched its new manifesto. Titled *Driving the Future of Automotive Professionals*, it sets out clear, actionable steps to attract talent, create defined career pathways, support the upskilling of the existing workforce, and ensure companies and organisations have all the skills they need to thrive.

“IF WE’RE GOING TO KEEP PACE WITH CHANGE AND REMAIN COMPETITIVE, WE MUST ACT NOW TO CLOSE THE SKILLS GAP”

ECONOMIC POWERHOUSE

The UK automotive sector is a cornerstone of the nation's economy, employing 866,000 individuals and contributing £37bn in 2023. Globally, it's considered a leader in innovation and sustainability. However, the IMI has identified that there could be a need to replace up to 144,000 of the current workforce who are due to retire by 2032 – that's a staggering 19%. Combine that with the 17,000 current vacancies and it's a number that could severely impact the sector's ability to be future-ready.

“This is a crucial moment for the automotive sector,” says Hayley Pells, Policy Lead at the IMI. “If we're going to keep pace with change and remain competitive, we must act now to close the skills gap. Our manifesto sets out how we can bring in new talent,

support the current workforce and prepare for tomorrow's technology. We're calling on employers, policy-makers and educators to work with us to make this happen. Together we can build a thriving, future-ready industry.”

ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES

The challenges faced by automotive are difficult to solve but not impossible. The manifesto outlines three commitments to address the core sector challenges that will address the problems and set the industry up for success. The IMI is determined to take the lead in tackling these challenges in four key ways:

01 ATTRACT AND RECRUIT TALENT

The IMI will continue its investment in implementing initiatives such as its There's More to Motor campaign to enhance the perception of automotive careers and provide clear and accessible entry pathways for prospective candidates. It will work with employers and partners to remove barriers to apprenticeships and create flexible training paths aligned with the skills the industry needs today. It will also continue to engage with policymakers in debates such as its recent response to the House of Lords Select Committee for Social Mobility, in which it highlighted the need for better integration of education and work.

02 RETAIN AND PROGRESS TALENT

With the automotive sector rapidly evolving, the IMI will equip existing employees with the necessary skills to adapt and achieve professional recognition through the IMI's Professional Register and IMI TechSafe. Furthermore, it will seek to empower the workforce, whether that's securing funding for education or celebrating the diverse individuals within the industry.

03 SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

In addition to providing the training needed to keep pace with modern technologies, the IMI pledges to deliver proactive skills forecasting, with its Insights by IMI series

enabling the sector to future-proof itself. As well as leveraging data, the IMI will continue to collaborate with industry and government to solve a range of challenges and help navigate a complex future.

“THE SECTOR DESPERATELY NEEDS TO ATTRACT NEW TALENT TO THE SECTOR AND ENSURE THAT THOSE WHO ARE ALREADY PART OF THE COMMUNITY ARE READY FOR EVERYTHING THE FUTURE BRINGS”

WORKING IN UNISON

Collaboration is key to ensuring that the automotive sector remains a leader on the global stage, securing jobs for tomorrow and strengthening the economy for years to come.

The IMI manifesto asks employers, policymakers and educational systems to work with the professional body to support the achievement of systemic reform.

This includes the IMI calling upon the government to recognise the automotive sector as a key pillar in its industrial growth strategy and to reflect this in research and development, regulatory reform and export strategies, delivering on their pre-election promise of a dedicated Automotive Strategy.

A thriving UK automotive sector depends on a highly skilled and adaptable workforce. By working together, the IMI hopes the sector can build approaches that make it not just resilient but a global leader in innovation, sustainability and opportunity. The IMI manifesto is a rallying cry to the industry to make sure it's prepared. ■

Read the IMI's *Driving the Future of Automotive Professionals* manifesto at bit.ly/IMI-Manifesto

A person is seen from the back, working on a mechanical assembly. The assembly includes a black metal frame with orange components, a spring, and a black hose. The background is a blurred exhibition stand with blue and white elements.

SKILLS CRISIS, CULTURE AND CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

The IMI had a strong presence at this year's Automechanika with its dedicated Motorvate event. Discover the five key messages that came from the discussions and how the industry is responding

Words_ Joseph Flaig **Images_** Ben Wright

THE AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY is in a constant sea of change. From EV powertrains and micromobility to autonomous vehicles and AI adoption, repairability challenges and a changing sales landscape are resulting in a “massive transformation”, according to IMI Head of Research, Careers and Inclusion Emma Carrigy.

It’s hard to think of a worse time for a talent crisis, but the industry is experiencing one, with more than one in five employees (about 144,000 people) expected to retire by 2032 according to IMI figures, with 17,000 current vacancies.

The IMI tackled these twin challenges at Motorvate, an event held inside the sprawling halls of Automechanika in Birmingham, which offered the ideal space to discuss issues and highlight just how exciting automotive is.

Held at the NEC in Birmingham, Automechanika aimed to attract and inspire the next generation by bringing together a range of auto brands such as Steer Automotive, Delphi, Electude and Toyota to highlight key IMI campaigns and activities, as well as giving attendees the chance to test their automotive skills.

“Uniting the industry is critical to the success of automotive to ensure it has the people and skills it needs,” said Carrigy. “We need to have talent come through, not just for the day-to-day work, but to see us into the future.”

So what did Motorvate reveal? Here are five key messages from the event’s packed programme.

**“THE SHOWCASE
AIMED TO ATTRACT
AND INSPIRE THE
NEXT GENERATION BY
BRINGING TOGETHER
A RANGE OF AUTO
BRANDS SUCH AS
STEER AUTOMOTIVE,
DELPHI, ELECTUDE
AND TOYOTA”**



01

CULTURE IS KEY

The skills transformation and upcoming wave of retirements are compounded by another issue: the drop in apprenticeship starts. According to Carrigy, numbers are down by 12% compared to pre-pandemic levels, so the industry needs to quickly change to ensure it can meet future demand.

This topic was discussed in a panel conversation between Carrigy, IMI Communications Manager Daniel Zealander, and Jade Price, MOT Tester and Service Technician at Warrington Audi. The panel agreed that positive company culture should be a major focus for automotive businesses trying to fill vacancies with younger recruits.

“Generation Z has a very different view on employability and work,” said Carrigy. She referred to research from insurance provider Admiral that found that 88% of Gen Z prioritise finding employers that provide both financial

security and a “sense of community and belonging”.

Inclusivity is another key tactic for bridging the skills gap. “Only 13.5% of the sector are women and just 10% are non-white British,” continued Carrigy. “We’re fishing from a small talent pool that needs to be widened.”

The industry is much better than it used to be, she told *MotorPro*, but some companies continue to prevent progress by fostering a sexist working environment. “There are still some things that need to be broken down,” she said. “It’s horrendous in this day and age. I heard a small garage owner say they couldn’t possibly employ women because they would have to fit new toilets.” >

Skills showcase:
The IMI set up a series of activities to test delegates’ automotive skills

02 SOCIAL MEDIA IS CHANGING INDUSTRY PERCEPTIONS

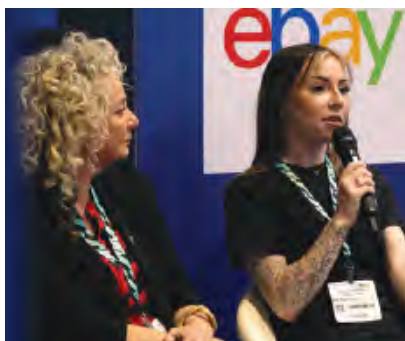
Thankfully, the backwards views expressed by some in the sector are mostly a thing of the past, and a new generation of workers is finding a more accepting and positive route into the profession by engaging with industry influencers and colleagues on social media. Several female professionals at Motorvate said online groups played a key part in them entering and thriving in the industry.

Speaking during the panel session, Price said it took her over 10 years to enter the industry after experiencing sexism at a garage when applying for a mechanics apprenticeship. Her strong personal motivation was backed up by observations of the industry that it was becoming more open and accepting, including LinkedIn communities for women in the motor trade.

"Social media has been a really big thing for me," she said. "I've had a lot of people send me messages – not just females, but also gay people and people of colour. For me, that's the biggest push."

Online networks are not just changing perceptions of the industry by bringing new people in, but are helping to change the industry itself.

Panel show:
The IMI's Emma
Carrigy (left) and
Warrington Audi's
Jade Price discuss
the auto skills shift



"SEVERAL FEMALE PROFESSIONALS SAID ONLINE GROUPS PLAYED A KEY PART IN THEM ENTERING AND THRIVING IN THE INDUSTRY"



03 A WAKE-UP CALL FOR THE INDUSTRY

Measures to tackle the talent crisis often focus on making sure new employees have the skills they need for the industry, according to Daniel Perry, Customer Success Manager at Electude UK. The interactive learning company supports the IMI Skills Competitions with its training equipment, including a vernier caliper box, micrometer box and an engine management simulator.

Perry adds that companies should also focus on the needs of their long-term employees as well as new recruits to make sure they don't fall behind.

"We know that time is money and taking people out of businesses costs money," he said. "But if you don't make that investment, the future workforce rapidly becomes underskilled. If that happens, we're going to end up in the situation where apprentices and trainees leaving the training sector will be more qualified on paper than the people they work alongside in, say, independent workshops. There needs to be a real wake-up call across the industry to support that."



"IF WE GET THE RIGHT PEOPLE IN THE RIGHT POSITIONS, IT ENABLES US TO MOVE FORWARD IN THE WAY WE WANT TO DO BUSINESS"

04 ATTITUDES ARE IMPORTANT

At the event, the Toyota & Lexus Academy promoted its technical training programmes, including apprenticeships at its facility in Burnaston, Derbyshire. Discussing the changing skills landscape, Toyota Training Manager Steve Hammond said the company is well-placed for the shift to EVs thanks to its extensive experience with hybrid cars, and stated that the behaviour and attitude of new trainees is really important.

"For Toyota, it's very much customers first," he said. "Once you have that, it breeds the right behaviour from everybody else. It's self-fulfilling: if we get the right people in the right positions, it enables us to move forward in the way we want to do business."



Military precision: The IMI re-signed the Armed Forces Covenant at the event, while (below) Toyota promoted its training academy



05 MILITARY AND MOTOR SKILLS IN PERFECT ALIGNMENT

The bustling NEC hall gave the IMI the perfect opportunity to reaffirm its ongoing support for the UK's military community, and the Institution re-signed its Armed Forces Covenant during a special ceremony in the Motorvate Ignite Arena. This underscores the IMI's commitment to supporting veterans and military families as they transition into automotive careers. (Find out more about the covenant signing on p25).

"This re-signing is more than a formality, it's a reaffirmation of our responsibility," said IMI Commercial Director and RAF veteran Tony Lawson. "The values, discipline and technical skills developed in the Armed Forces align perfectly with the needs of our sector."

Find out more about the IMI's There's More To Motor campaign and how it supports the industry at moretomotor.org.uk

"THIS RE-SIGNING IS A REAFFIRMATION OF OUR RESPONSIBILITY"



A BOLD NEW VISION

Graeme Potts, the new Chair of the IMI Board, explains how the Institution is adding fresh perspectives, deeper sector insight and a shared commitment to securing the future of the automotive industry

Words_James Scoltock

“I WANT TO CONTINUE THE DRIVE FOR GREATER PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS TO IMPROVE PUBLIC RECOGNITION OF HOW GOOD THE INDUSTRY AND ITS PEOPLE ARE”

GRAEME POTTS JOINS THE IMI as it begins a new era, developing its approach to remain relevant and help the sector attract, recruit and retain the right people to close the skills gap.

Having founded Eden Motor Group in 2008, Potts provides a wealth of sector experience with a proven track record in automotive retail. As Chair of the IMI Board, he will play a critical role in guiding the IMI's long-term vision, working with the Executive Team to ensure the organisation continues to be a trusted voice for automotive professionals.

WHAT WERE YOUR REASONS FOR TAKING THE POSITION OF IMI CHAIR?

Firstly, I'm very aware of how dramatically the landscape is changing, with businesses facing challenges with new technology and customer demands, plus OEM and retailer consolidation. Secondly, I've been on a crusade, both as a mouthpiece of the industry and in the businesses that I've run. I want to send out a clarion call for better recognition and continue the drive for greater professional standards to improve public recognition of how good the industry and its people are.

The fact that the IMI is also at a key turning point in terms of change in governance and needs to redefine its proposition for the long term also made it an assignment that appeals to my passion for strategic involvement.

WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST INDUSTRY SHIFTS THAT THE IMI NEEDS TO BE AWARE OF?

It's largely in the technology. Cars are better than they have ever been but they are harder to fix. That technical development involves IT and people in equal measure, and is moving the industry and the IMI into a new space. I hope it throws up opportunities for the perception of our professionalism to be enhanced.

HOW CAN THE IMI ADAPT TO MEET THE CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES IN AN EVER-CHANGING INDUSTRY?

From the technical side, we need to understand and predict where the technology is going, so our accreditation, qualifications and training can be made more relevant to current and future customers. But it's important not to run ahead of the market, because new technology in the UK penetrates the market at the rate of 5% per annum at best.

New technology coming into the vehicle parc gets all the headlines. There's a lot of talk about driverless cars, but when that technology eventually comes to the UK, it will only be a small part of the automotive market for years to come.

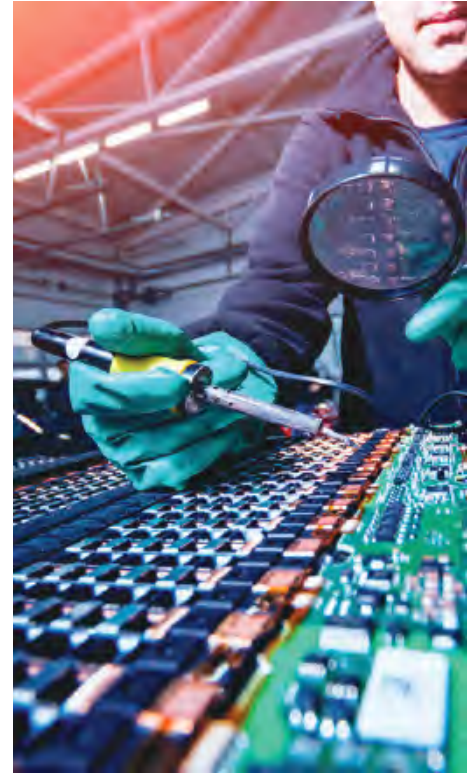
Therefore, one of our challenges is making our products appropriate for the people either entering the industry or increasing the skills of those already within it, while staying relevant to new technology. That brings a strategic and resource allocation challenge, which is something I'll be getting into.

WHAT SKILLS AND EXPERTISE WILL YOU BRING TO THE ROLE OF CHAIR?

My job is to ensure that the governance of the organisation is leading edge and proper, and to lead an almost entirely new board to make sure we do all the things that I've talked about – to ensure that our governance, the whole integrity of numbers and forecasting, and use of resources is correct.

My background is that I'm a full-time CEO of a medium-sized motor group with over 20 years' experience in advisory and board work, so the IMI will be on the front foot in its agenda of making products and services that are valued and relevant to all our members.

Stay up to date with the latest IMI news at bit.ly/IMI-Industry-News



Fine detail: Graeme Potts understands the challenges of the auto industry



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT YOUR IMI? HELP DANIEL GET HOME



Daniel Flemen's family needs to raise £100,000 to be able to care for him at home



Seeing your child become ill and require 24-hour care is something no parent wants to imagine, but for IMI member Nigel Flemen and his family, the unthinkable happened.

Aged just 13, Flemen's son Daniel was diagnosed with a low-grade glioma in the centre of his brain on its stem. During treatment for the condition, Daniel had a seizure while being sedated and his health rapidly deteriorated, with tragic repercussions for his physical and cognitive skills. His condition worsened and he required an emergency operation to remove the tumour. The operation wasn't successful and Daniel suffered a stroke, resulting in vital structures in his brain being damaged.

Daniel is currently on a respiratory ward as he requires non-invasive ventilation at night. He's also hoisted for all transfers, needs help with every aspect of his personal care and is fed by a nasogastric tube.

The impact on family life has been immeasurable. Daniel is currently in Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, which requires a 100-mile round trip from the family home near Preston. His family are desperate for him to come home, but before that can happen, adaptations need to be made so Daniel can be cared for in a suitable environment.

In order to do this, Flemen and his family need to raise

£100,000 to give Daniel his own space, which would include a bedroom, adapted bathroom, carers facilities for his 24-hour support, and most importantly, somewhere he can socialise with friends and family.

"We're in a battle to get the funds together to do what we need to do," says Flemen. "Because you look at it and go 'How on earth are we going to do that?'"

Fundraising is critical to helping the family re-unite and there's been a huge amount of support, which has brought a little positivity to a situation no one wants to face. "Since this all happened, I've had to put my

**"TO BELIEVE IN
PEOPLE DOING
GOOD IS AN
AMAZING THING"**

trust in everybody," says Flemen. "It's been the best thing I've ever done. To believe in people doing good is an amazing thing."

The long-standing IMI member is now hoping the IMI community can bring him and his family closer to their fundraising target and help Daniel return home.

To find out more about Daniel's story and to support his GoFundMe appeal, go to gofundme.com/DanielFlemen



NEW LEGAL HELPLINE FOR IMI MEMBERS



**TO SPEAK WITH A LEGAL ADVISOR,
CALL THE HELPLINE ON 01172 442 794**

You may also be required to provide your IMI membership number, so make sure you have this to hand.

At some point in life, everyone will need legal assistance, and as an IMI member you have instant access to the knowledge you need. Our legal helpline provider has shifted from Taylor & Emmet to Lyons Davidson, but while the details have changed, the support remains the same.

Speaking with a legal advisor could be an important first step if you are in any of the following situations:

- Purchasing a property
- Landlord and tenancy disputes
- Involvement in an accident
- Issues at work
- Making sure your loved ones are taken care of.

As an IMI member, you can access the telephone legal helpline completely free of charge. Lyons Davidson's experienced legal team is always available to provide clear, friendly and practical advice on any legal issues you may have.

Their goal is to help you find solutions you can implement yourself wherever possible. And if you require more specialised legal representation, they will connect you with one of their expert teams to discuss the next steps and any associated fees.



Get in touch

We're always open and available to talk if you have any questions or queries. Get in touch with the membership or centre support teams on 01992 511521 or email hello@theimi.org.uk



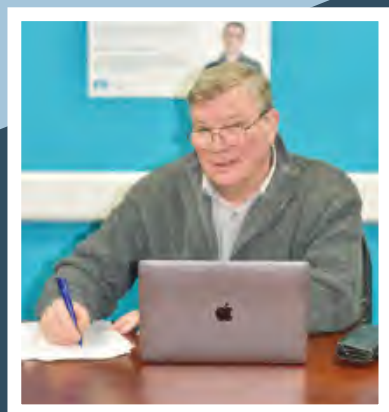
WE WISH TO EXPRESS OUR DEEPEST SYMPATHY TO THE FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF...

Derek Austin MIMI Kent, aged 91. **Robert Hawkins** MIMI, Bedfordshire, aged 86. **Peter Dawson** FIMI, Gloucestershire, aged 89. **Thomas James** MIMI, Shrewsbury, aged 83. **Robin Gray** MIMI, Stafford, aged 81. **Heath Halle** MIMI, Essex, aged 57. **John Page** MIMI, Salisbury, aged 85. **Graham Loftus** AMIMI, Bedfordshire, aged 74. **John Hughes** MIMI, Dublin, aged 90. **Herbert Skitt** MIMI, Shropshire, aged 84. **Dale Wilde** AffIMI, Worcestershire, aged 69. **Arthur Reynolds** MIMI, West Midlands, aged 92. **Michael Warner** FIMI, Gloucestershire, aged 77. **Steven Sparks** AMIMI, Lincolnshire, aged 75. **Peter Lister** AMIMI, West Yorkshire, aged 68. **Denis Wilde** MIMI, West Yorkshire, aged 74. **Graham Mills** FIMI, Surrey, aged 76. **Roger Miller** FIMI, Hertfordshire, aged 82. **David Parkin** MIMI, Norfolk, aged 76. **Colin Graydon** AMIMI, Staffordshire, aged 71. **John Gorse** FIMI, Buckinghamshire, aged 94. **Robert Brann** AMIMI, Surrey, aged 73. **Richard Bates** FIMI, Cheshire, aged 92. **John Whale** MIMI, Staffordshire, aged 65.

A ROUTE BACK TO WORK

As government reforms push more people into employment, automotive has a responsibility to help them succeed. Ronnie Wilson, CEO of First Step Trust, explains how a job in automotive could be the beginning of a fantastic career

WORDS_DANIELLE BAGNALL



People person:
Ronnie Wilson,
CEO of First Step
Trust, understands
the importance
of giving people
a chance

A MAJOR SHIFT is currently happening in employment policy. In a bid to reduce welfare dependency, the government is rolling out new initiatives to encourage people with long-term health conditions and disabilities to find and stay in work. It's a strategy that signals opportunity, especially in automotive, where skills shortages and staffing problems persist. The CEO of First Step Trust (FST), Ronnie Wilson MBE, sees this as a huge opportunity to change the way the industry thinks about recruitment. "There are thousands of people who want to work but they have been written off because they don't fit the traditional mould," he explains. "There's an untapped workforce ready to be trained. We just need to make the leap and invest in people who have the potential but haven't been given the chance. We're showing the industry and society that with the right support, they can thrive."

A VIRTUAL SUCCESS

FST is a registered charity that's been quietly breaking down employment barriers for more than 30 years. Working in London, Merseyside and Greater Manchester, it supports people with serious mental health conditions and other challenges, helping them build the skills and confidence to enter industries such as automotive.

The government's renewed focus on employment is welcome, Wilson says, but it must be met with understanding. "You can't just say to someone who's been out of work for ten years, 'Right, off you go' and expect them to cope. Confidence takes time and skills take training. We've built a model that recognises that and allows people to grow into the role."

That model is SMaRT Garage, a social enterprise workplace that, from the outside, looks like any other MOT and servicing garage. But inside, people who have been out of work for years work alongside professional technicians,

learning to strip brakes, fit tyres and build other transferable skills. And increasingly, they are doing it using virtual reality (VR).

A DIGITAL EDUCATION

One of the things that sets FST apart is its innovative approach to training. It uses immersive VR technology to teach practical skills in a safe and accessible way, with a focus on those who have previously struggled in traditional learning environments.

"Many of our workforce have mental health challenges, low confidence or undiagnosed learning needs such as dyslexia," says Wilson. "VR levels the playing field. It's learning by doing, without fear of getting it wrong in front of others."

Alongside an IMI-approved tyre-fitting course (the only one in the UK taught using VR), FST's 10-module Motor Vehicle Technician programme enables people to gain confidence and technical competence without lifting a spanner. "It's an incredible tool," Ronnie says. "It removes a lot of the barriers to getting started, while for employers, it reduces downtime and risk."

At the charity's garage in Woolwich, London, the success stories speak for themselves. Lead Garage Trainer Laura Giri first joined as a trainee after years of struggling with her mental health. "Working in the garage has given me so much self-confidence and self-belief," she says. "I enjoy teaching others and feel really useful. My life has a new purpose and meaning."

Giri was a finalist for the recent IMI 30% Club Inspiring Automotive Women Award in recognition of her work in building future talent in the industry.

The success stories don't stop there. So far, six former FST trainees have moved into apprenticeships with Halfords. "They're not just surviving, they're thriving," Ronnie says. "They're qualified, they're earning, and they're proud of what they do."

WIN-WIN SITUATION

Given that the IMI predicts a shortfall of 160,000 mechanics in the next decade, including a need for 16,000



"WE JUST NEED TO MAKE THE LEAP AND INVEST IN PEOPLE WHO HAVE THE POTENTIAL BUT HAVEN'T BEEN GIVEN THE CHANCE"

EV technicians by 2032, FST offers a compelling business case for widening access to the automotive workforce. That's where FST's model dovetails with industry need.

"The people we work with are a massive untapped resource," Wilson says. "We're helping them into a trade that desperately needs them. It's a win-win situation."

Another factor is that automotive lends itself well to practical learning. "Some of the people we support have never thought about working in a garage before," Wilson continues. "But once they try it and experience that tangible, hands-on learning, they realise they can do it. More than that, they want to."

As the government's new welfare-to-work strategy gains traction, Wilson anticipates an increase in referrals from statutory services such as the NHS and DWP. But his vision is broader than that.

"We want to make this mainstream," he says. "Why shouldn't VR training >

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK!

Like what you're reading or want to see something different?

Fill out a short reader survey and help make MotorPro even better.



You could win a £50 Amazon voucher!

Go to bit.ly/IMI-Motorpro-Survey or scan the QR code



INSIGHTS BY
INSTITUTE OF THE
MOTOR INDUSTRY



NEW INSIGHTS BY IMI PODCAST



Episode 3: In Conversation with Sarah Sillars

This episode features an in-depth conversation with Sarah Sillars OBE, Hon FIMI, the newly appointed Interim CEO of the IMI.

In this interview, we explore the IMI's crucial work in attracting and retaining talent, shaping the skills agenda, and providing the professional recognition that empowers individuals throughout their careers.

Find out more:
[#InsightsByIMI](https://twitter.com/InsightsByIMI)
[#ProudToBeIMI](https://twitter.com/ProudToBeIMI)



www.theimi.org.uk/insightsbyimi

be an option for anyone looking to enter the trade? We've proved that it works – it builds confidence, skills and motivation. It shortens the path to employment. And most importantly, it gives people who have felt excluded a real chance."

FST is now working with a growing list of industry partners, including Autotech, Halfords and the Palmer Foundation to further expand its programmes, particularly in hybrid and EV training. As the sector faces rapid technological change and an urgent need for talent, it's time to think differently about where that talent comes from.

"Accessible learning is good learning," Wilson says. "If we can make training work for people with the biggest barriers, we can make it work for everyone."

The government's determination to reform the welfare state and bring more people into employment could be an opportunity for automotive. The sector desperately needs new talent, and as FST has shown, automotive offers a range of careers that could suit many different people – if they are given the chance. ■

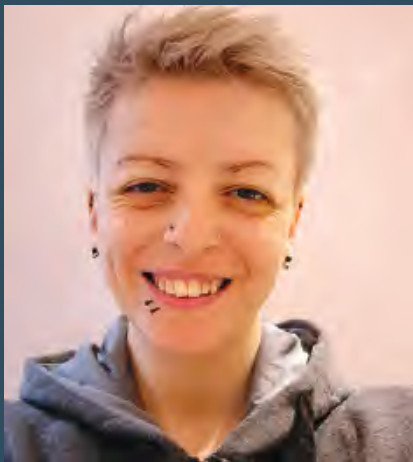
Discover how diverse the automotive sector is and the opportunities it offers at bit.ly/IMI-Careers

Hands-on learning:
The auto sector is particularly suited to people who prefer practical training



"I haven't looked back"

Laura Giri overcame huge challenges to find a home in automotive. Discover how the First Step Trust Lead Garage Trainer is now helping others



"I was referred to First Step Trust by a drug and alcohol service. The structure and routine was really helpful. I felt useful, fixing stuff and learning new things, and the people were really nice. That made a big difference. I just loved it, I haven't looked back and I've been sober ever since starting.

I was quite an anxious person and my confidence wasn't that great, so every week I'd come to the Trust and they'd treat me like an actual work colleague. Then my days went up because they saw that I was progressing; I went to two days then Andy Palmer [former Nissan COO and Aston Martin CEO] made me a Palmer Apprentice and paid for me to go to college for my Level 2 qualification – I skipped Level 1 completely because of all my experience in the garage.

I'm now an official employee at First Step Trust, in charge of the

10-module programme and looking after the workforce, helping people get to where they want to be.

Being shortlisted for the Automotive 30% Club: Inspiring Automotive Woman Award was daunting. I went to the event and was shaking so much. I'm not used to that sort of stuff. But there were loads of people that I already knew, so it was nice to see familiar faces.

It's only been three and a half years but I've done so much in that time. I never thought I would be capable of doing anything like this. What really makes this job for me is helping the workforce. I like watching their confidence grow.

For the time being I'm really happy. I want to go on and get my Level 3 at some point and become an MOT tester. I just want to progress as far as I can."

FUTURE TALENT FUNDING

It can be challenging to get ahead as a student or apprentice, but bursaries from the IMI and the Fellowship of the Motor Industry offer a welcome career boost

WORDS_ JAMES SCOLTOCK

PASSION AND DRIVE can get you to many places in automotive, but sometimes an unexpected win and a sliding doors moment can help steer you in an entirely new direction.

When Aaron Linsey won the IMI Full-Time Student of the Year award back in 2024, he was ready to celebrate. But while he was being congratulated on a much-deserved win, he hadn't realised his evening was about to get even better.

"I had my award on the table, a mouthful of food and all I heard over the loudspeakers was 'Aaron Linsey'," he remembers. "My teacher, the person who nominated me, said I needed to go up to the stage. I didn't know why I was up there and didn't realise until I got back to my table and opened the envelope that it was because I was given the Fellowship of the Motor Industry Bursary."

Linsey studied a foundational Level 1 Certificate in Automotive Maintenance at the Colchester

Institute, before moving to the Level 2 Vehicle Maintenance and Repair programme. It was on that course that his passion for motorsport began.

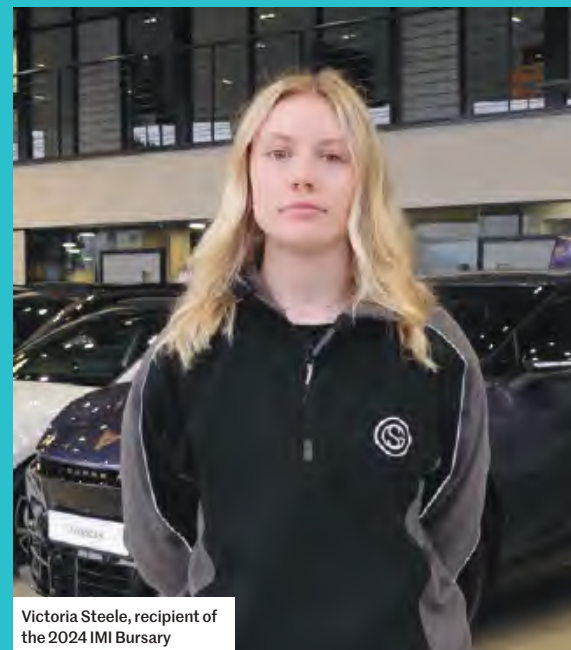
Linsey worked with a small team and his tutor to construct a Lotus Seven-type kit car from scratch, something he loved. And it's through the opportunities the bursary provided that he's continuing down this high-performance path.

"I reached out to the IMI and asked them what courses they recommend I study," he explains. "I ended up doing Aircon Diagnostics, ADAS and the Level 2 and 3 in EV and Hybrid Maintenance."

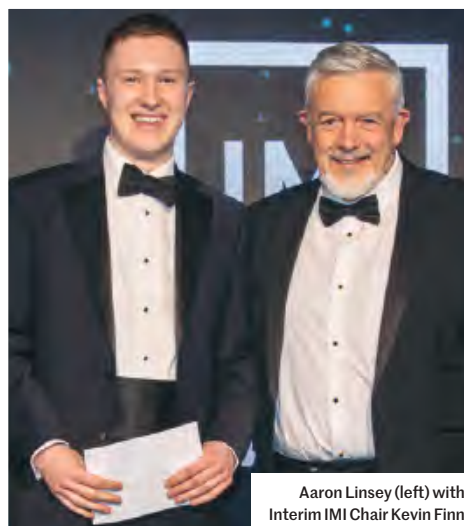
OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

It was during his IMI studies that Linsey found out about the Motorsport Engineering degree at the National Motorsport Academy – something he found out about following a chance conversation with one of his coursemates.

"It was at the back of my mind for a while, but then I thought, 'You know what? I'm going to do it,'" he says.



Victoria Steele, recipient of the 2024 IMI Bursary



Aaron Linsey (left) with Interim IMI Chair Kevin Finn

At the same time, Linsey reached out to MK Sportscars, the firm that supplied the kit car he worked on at college, to see if they needed anyone. They did, and he's now working on vehicles he loves, studying a course he hopes will catapult him into the race paddocks at circuits around the world.

All this was made possible by a bursary win that helped Linsey acquire the professional skills he needs to succeed and a sliding doors moment that could have resulted in his career going in a completely different direction.

VICTORIA STEELE

Recipient of the 2024 IMI Bursary

Giving future talent the jump-start their career needs is something the IMI is committed to. It's why it awards a number of bursaries every year to support members of the automotive community who have experienced personal or financial challenges.

The bursaries are designed to help individuals progress and accelerate their careers by giving them access to the tools, training and resources they need to succeed. Last year, the IMI Bursary was awarded to Victoria Steele, an exceptional Automotive Refinisher at Sinclair Group, who also took home the gold medal at the 2024 IMI Skills Competitions.

The bursary is helping Steele invest in her own professional equipment, which is essential in a role where technicians are often expected to supply their own tools. This can lead to challenges when relying on shared kit.

"Winning the IMI Bursary felt unreal to me," she says. "Having the support from the IMI to further my career was a nice feeling. The bursary

will enable me to purchase brand new equipment, which I can look after myself. It's going to be high-end, new equipment, the best available on the market, which will help me a lot."

TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Steele used her bursary to invest in top-of-the-line equipment from SATA, including two jet X Digital Pro spray guns, a SATA Vision 5000 carbon respirator, a SATAjet 100 B F RP professional airbrush and a five-gun storage case. The tools will enable her to work more safely and efficiently, but also increase her confidence and independence in the workshop, setting her up for more success.

"I knew instantly that I wanted to spend my bursary win on equipment to further my training and take pride in having my own equipment," says Steele. "I knew that SATA was the right choice – I have always loved the brand and now I have my own guns to cherish for years."

Winning the IMI Bursary was the gateway to purchasing new tools, but Steele says the Institute's support goes much further.

"The IMI has really shaped my career path," she says. "They have been supportive throughout the skills competition and my college course. They want the best for everyone and do what they can to help."



Jacob Fish (right) with the Chair of the FMI Peter Cottle



JACOB FISH

Recipient of the 2025 FMI Bursary

The Fellowship of the Motor Industry (FMI), in partnership with the IMI, awards an annual bursary to an individual who has demonstrated remarkable dedication to their automotive career in the face of personal challenge or adversity.

This year, Jacob Fish, a student from Bridgwater and Taunton College, received a boost to his career plan thanks to the FMI Bursary. Fish's resilience in overcoming challenges, his leadership qualities and dedication to both his education and his peers make him an exceptional student. He consistently goes above and beyond, serving as a role model and source of inspiration to all those around him. ■

"HAVING THE SUPPORT FROM THE IMI TO FURTHER MY CAREER WAS A NICE FEELING"



Teagan Whiteman (right) with Sarah Whiteside-Jones

2025 IMI BURSARY RECIPIENTS

This year, the IMI delivered two bursaries. The first was to Teagan Whiteman of Fix Auto, who not only impressed judges at this year's IMI Skills Competition in Refinishing, but has also been shortlisted to represent the UK at the WorldSkills Competition in Shanghai, which takes place in 2026.

The second bursary was awarded to Matthew Ford, who showed tremendous strength and resilience when he won the silver medal in Light Vehicle Technology, despite experiencing a personal tragedy just days before the competitions started.

"HE CONSISTENTLY GOES ABOVE AND BEYOND, SERVING AS A ROLE MODEL AND SOURCE OF INSPIRATION"

Find out more about the Fellowship of the Motor Industry Bursary at bit.ly/FMI-Bursary

Find out more about the IMI Awards at bit.ly/IMI-Awards-2025

“WHEN IT COMES TO THE SKILLS OF THE FUTURE AND RETENTION IN AUTOMOTIVE, IT’S ABOUT BUILDING LIFELONG CAREER PATHWAYS”

As the new IMI manifesto sets the agenda for the automotive industry, IMI President Jim Saker explains how it marks a key turning point for the organisation

WORDS_JAMES SCOLTOCK

Why is the IMI manifesto so important?

It’s an opportunity to lay down a definitive stance for the IMI in order to serve the industry and support our members. It’s a statement that says what we’re going to do to influence the future, refocus and make sure we’re more involved in setting the agenda.

With so much happening in the sector, how did you determine the areas where the IMI can have a real impact?

The manifesto primarily focuses on people: the idea of attracting and recruiting people into the sector, and making the sector more attractive to a wider range and more diverse group of people. That’s because the changes taking place are going to need more people with different skills.

The sector needs a more enhanced

understanding of technology – it’s more software-orientated for example – and that changes the focus when it comes to attracting and recruiting the talent the sector needs.

But it’s also about giving people a lifelong pathway in the industry. In some professions, you can start a career and you’ll know your pathway all the way through. The motor industry doesn’t have that in the same way. You could start off on the technical side or sales, but then divert somewhere else. So it’s about showing that there are opportunities to spread yourself, do different activities and have a different career.

That’s important because young people are now taking the line that they will go into a job for two years, learn as much as they can and move

on. The motor industry offers that diversity of opportunity, which other sectors don’t. You could move from working on a car to selling a car to working in finance.

How can the industry ensure its talent isn’t lost to other sectors?

In the automotive industry, you have two things happening at the same time. You have people rotating around and people gaining skills that be applied in other sectors that have more attractive, clearly defined career paths. When it comes to the skills of the future and retention, it’s about building those lifelong career pathways and making them clearer. So in the same way as other sectors, people can progress and don’t need to leave the industry to do it.

What can the IMI do to help attraction and recruitment across the industry?

We need to be more proactive in collaborating with employers to make access to the sector easier. For many very important reasons, employers don't always recruit for a career. Recruitment tends to be short-term to fill a gap. We need to start looking at the bigger picture, working with education institutions and policy makers to address what's required for the sector to be prosperous.

Why is the IMI manifesto so important?

Because we're criticising other people for not doing something. If you criticise government for not having a proper industrial strategy or joined-up thinking with regards to the automotive sector, you need to have an outlook yourselves. The manifesto says we all need to collaborate, whether that's employers, policy makers or educational institutions. We need to bring everyone together to provide a coherent strategy.

We're the only automotive body that focuses on people. We're here for our members, to say what's best for the people who actually work in the industry. That's very different to other organisations that represent a business or

a brand, and puts the IMI in an incredibly important position.

How can the IMI leverage changes in technology to help the industry?

The IMI can't prescribe the technology but it can help members understand its implications. It's more about being engaged in the interface between technology and people. One thing that often happens is as technology progresses, you end up trying to work out how it will impact the workforce.

For example, one consequence of ADAS is that the windscreen is now a massively high-tech piece of kit. Fitting a windscreen years ago was relatively straightforward, but because of camera technology and alignment needs it's now safety critical. As technology changes, you also need to recognise that it changes the nature of the human interaction with it.

To download the new IMI manifesto, go to bit.ly/IMI-Manifesto

**“WE’RE THE ONLY
AUTOMOTIVE BODY
THAT FOCUSES ON
PEOPLE. WE’RE HERE
FOR OUR MEMBERS,
TO SAY WHAT’S BEST
FOR THE PEOPLE WHO
ACTUALLY WORK IN
THE INDUSTRY”**



SHOCK VALUE: INSIDE THE KIA EV3

With the award-winning EV3 racking up the sales, Kia's push for electrification has resulted in a need to upskill its technicians to keep it charged and ready for the road

WORDS_ALEX GOY **IMAGES_**WILL AMLOT



Small car, big package:
The Kia EV3 offers
all the function and
performance of the
EV9 in a smaller frame



K

IA'S STAKE IN THE EV SPACE is getting larger by the day. The Korean firm's current line-up is winning fans all over the world, with its vehicles covering almost every end of the market – big, small or medium, Kia is across the entire market.

Its most recent addition, the EV3, has already made waves and has been lavished with praise and awards in its first year. Currently it's the junior member of the EV-designated range, although a pocket-sized EV2 is on the way in 2026. The EV3 is based on the versatile E-GMP platform that underpins all Kia's electric vehicles, alongside those from Hyundai and Genesis, so its bones are as solid as they come.

Translating Kia's latest design to a smaller frame than the imposing (and massive) EV9 may seem like a difficult task, but the dinky EV3 is a smart-looking thing. And judging by how many you'll see on the UK's roads today, the general public also seems to like it. An impressive mix of looks, affordability, range and a generous set of standard equipment has put Kia well and truly onto a winner.

BACKING UP THE BRAND

With so much success, Kia not only has to make sure its vehicles compare well with the competition, it has to invest in its network of dealers and service centres to keep them up to scratch, especially in an evolving automotive sector where technology is constantly changing.

To keep standards high, Kia's state-of-the-art

Academy on the outskirts of Derby is a one-stop shop that offers classroom and practical training for students of all levels. Working with Skillnet and the IMI as the end-point assessment organisation for apprentices working through the facility, it's the ideal place for Kia to share the fine details of its futuristic technology and ensure its network understands how to keep its cars on the road.

With an increasingly electrified line-up, Kia's technicians face a range of new challenges, with new processes, new systems and plenty of new safety practices to get their heads around. "It's a

"AN IMPRESSIVE MIX OF LOOKS, AFFORDABILITY, RANGE AND A GENEROUS SET OF STANDARD EQUIPMENT HAS PUT KIA WELL AND TRULY ONTO A WINNER"

different way of working," explains Barry Alder, Technical Trainer at the Kia Academy. "If we look at the internal combustion engine, we teach a certain skill set, but with advances in technology, we have to teach different things."

Since today's vehicles are far more complex, than ever before and becoming more complex >



by the day, Alder has a long list of things to teach. “Setting up the radar, calibrating radars, front radars, corner radars, cameras,” he says. “The technology on the vehicle is evolving and the skill set for the technician is getting wider.”

“YOU NEED TO STRIKE THE BALANCE BETWEEN MAKING TECHNICIANS COMFORTABLE AND CONFIDENT AND NOT SCARING THEM TO DEATH”

GENERATION TECH

The breadth of skills required to keep an EV up to scratch is huge. They are fantastically complicated networks of software and hardware that function as an entirely new driving system that fulfils every need of the modern driver. Alder adds that even standard features such as heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) have changed thanks to heat pump systems, meaning that automotive techs also need to become heating engineers on top of everything else.

Technical Trainer Chris Atkin echoes the spread of technology: “There’s a wifi hotspot, USB-C connectors, over-the-air updates, vehicle to load and much more. The functionality of vehicle to load means you can plug in and use any electrical device using the vehicle as a power source. One of our trainers has been known to plug a strimmer into their car to clear the way for plants.”

To keep make sure everyone understands the new technology, everyone at Kia learns from each other. The more experienced techs know the old ways, while the more fresh-faced offer the knowledge of new approaches. “With the digital key, wifi hotspot and the other new tech, the younger generation are straight on it,” says Atkin. “They become the teacher and I become the student. They excel in connected services.”

THE FEAR FACTOR

When bringing new people into the EV fold, there’s lots to learn, whether you have been working on cars for decades or days. “It’s sometimes hard to put across having a healthy respect for safety,” says Atkin. “You need to strike the balance between making technicians comfortable and confident and not scaring them to death.”



“THE SYSTEM PREVENTATIVELY FINDS FAULTS AND CAN PREDICT WHEN SOMETHING IS GOING TO CAUSE AN ISSUE”

“Initially there’s a lack of understanding and that can induce fear,” adds Alder. “But if you follow safety procedures and protocols and don’t shortcut anything, they are perfectly safe to work on.”

Kia’s technicians are initially taught to IMI Level Three, which gives them a solid understanding of identifying the high-voltage system, making it safe and knowing your way around a potentially deadly bit of hardware.

Of course, adhering to the workshop manual is also vital, and Technical Training Assistant Manager Brendan McGrath makes it clear that PPE is hugely important. “The techs are given the tools to use all the safety measures they need and use the right PPE,” he says. “It’s all detailed in the manual.”

So who’s looking after Kia customers’ cars today? It’s a mix of skill levels, says McGrath. “We recommend our network dealers have at least one master tech, one expert tech and a certified technician. They will all have come through the Academy.”



School for stars: The Kia Academy trains techs in every aspect of the brand’s EV range





“THE TECHNOLOGY ON THE VEHICLE IS EVOLVING AND THE SKILL SET FOR THE TECHNICIAN IS GETTING WIDER”

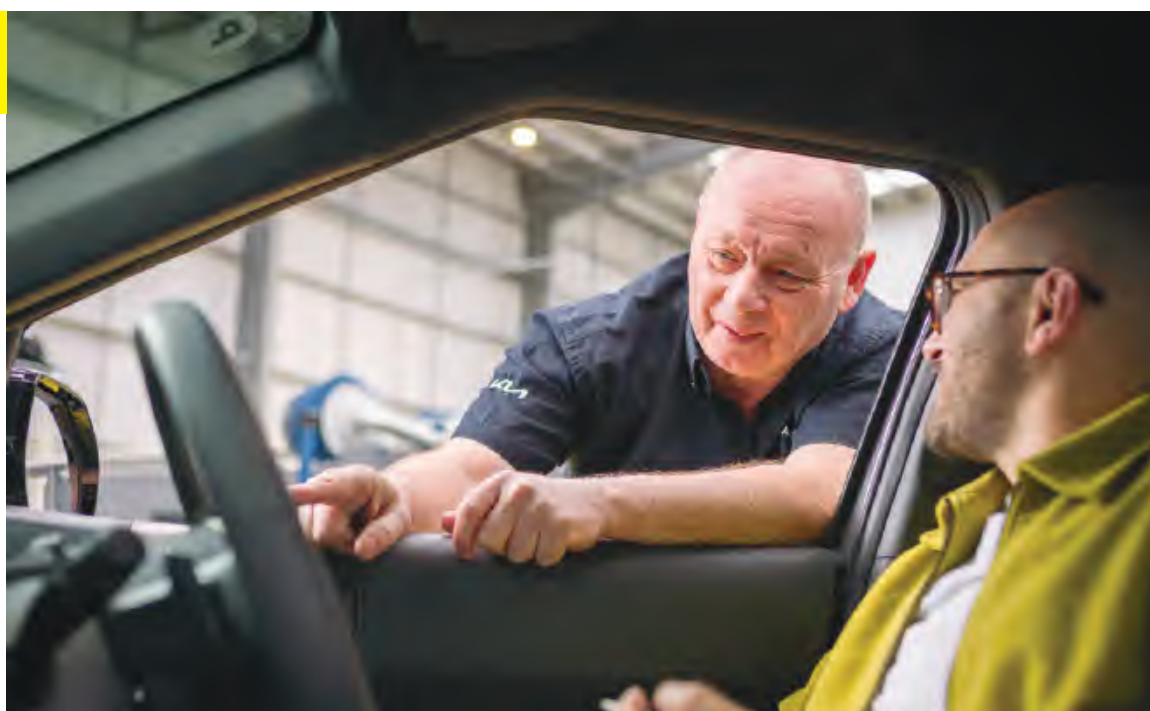
ALWAYS LEARNING

Despite the shared platform and technology, there are a number of differences between Kia’s EV models, which means its techs need to follow specific service sheets for each one. Alder notes that while spark plug and oil changes are a thing of the past, there are a lot of brand new techniques to learn: “We also do brake disc cleaning since the discs are not used as much because of regenerative braking.”

Over the past decade, the team at Kia’s Academy has not only learned how modern ICE technology works, but also how to maintain the very latest vehicle technology. In the process, they have discovered that with electrification comes the development of entirely unexpected skills that may have previously appeared unrelated to cars. And, of course, all techs now understand how to use an electric mower to cut the grass when miles away from a plug. ■



Point and click:
Technical Trainer
Barry Alder guides
us through the
EV3’s finer points





HOW KIA TECHNICIANS KEEP THE EV3 ON THE ROAD

As times change, so do the requirements for keeping a car in tip-top condition. Kia Academy's Technical Training Assistant Manager Brendan McGrath explains what Kia techs have learned about the EV3.

01



PMA

It's easy to get left behind if you drop the ball or choose to ignore what's going on in the world. "You need a positive mindset to embrace the evolving technology and should keep updated by attending relevant training courses."

02



Know your onions

With all the information available, there's a wealth of knowledge to learn, but confidence is key. "It's vital to be confident and competent in the subject matter, and be backed up by relevant qualifications."

03



Read, read, read

There's a lot to read and getting through it is a must. "You have to have the ability to correctly navigate the technical literature."

04



Safety first, safety second

Electricity is dangerous in large doses, so knowing how to prepare for it should be second nature. "Apply safe working practices and use all relevant PPE and VPE correctly."

05



Keep tooled up

Choosing the right tool for the job and knowing how to use it correctly is critical to doing your job. "The ability to identify and use the correct diagnostic equipment and special tools will keep you on top."

THE SELF-DRIVING REVOLUTION

A photograph showing the interior of a self-driving vehicle. Several passengers are seated, looking out the front windshield. A large screen above the dashboard displays a 360-degree view of the vehicle's surroundings. The text 'We Ride' is visible on the dashboard. The overall atmosphere is futuristic and clean.

The road to connected autonomous vehicles needs to be navigated with caution, but huge investment and the biggest brands are driving it forward

WORDS_ NEIL KENNETT

Hands-free operation: (Left) Renault Group is working with WeRide to develop automated public transport, while (right) UK company Aurigo leads the way in self-driving vehicles for airports



THE TECHNOLOGY MAY not have entered your workshop just yet, but there's a lot of chat about connected and automated mobility (CAM). As greater connectivity enters the sector and more firms invest in bringing autonomous technology to the market, driverless vehicles are quickly becoming a viable proposition for many mobility companies

Events such as the annual CAM Innovators' Day are setting the agenda for the industry as it navigates its way through some complex challenges. Improving road safety, widening self-driving pilot studies and developing high-speed communications technology are all on the sector's to-do list.

Beyond the technical skills, there is also a growing demand for digital literacy. As traditional internal combustion engines are replaced by electric powertrains, the automotive sector is becoming increasingly reliant on new systems, such as high-voltage charging infrastructure. Experts say that apprentices will need a firm grasp of these.

DASH CAM

This year's CAM Innovators' Day was organised by Zenzic, sister organisation to the Advanced

Propulsion Centre (APC), and focused on mission alignment, finding common ground in the APC's goal of accelerating the transition to a net-zero automotive industry, and accelerating the self-driving revolution.

"CAM and net zero are on different tracks, which I believe will converge thanks to CAM's potential to go beyond the vehicle to tear up ownership models," said Ian Constance, CEO of Zenzic and the APC.

If he's right, this could mean enormous changes for everyone involved in automotive, which is why this event and others like it feature some of its biggest names. Caterpillar and engineering consultancy Fusion Processing are just two, along with a sizeable government representation. And what these companies and organisations are saying is worth listening to as the technology has the ability to address everything from safety to sustainability.

AUTONOMOUS FOR THE PEOPLE

Mike Looney, Caterpillar's Engineering Manager, Energy & Transportation Technology Research, highlighted Cat studies that showed a 30% fuel saving for off-road automated vehicles over human drivers, while Jim Hutchinson, Fusion Processing's CEO, reported double-digit fuel savings during the CAVForth self-driving bus project, without it being a primary focus.

"The more you can make autonomous vehicle services commercially viable, the more you can get people out of cars and into buses, which is great for net zero," said Hutchinson. "The questions used to be about the technology, but that barrier is coming down because people can now see it working. The safety and security can be demonstrated." >

"AS GREATER CONNECTIVITY ENTERS THE SECTOR, DRIVERLESS VEHICLES ARE QUICKLY BECOMING VIABLE"



INSTITUTE OF THE
MOTOR INDUSTRY

DRIVING THE FUTURE OF AUTOMOTIVE PROFESSIONALS

**SHAPING THE
FUTURE**



**RAISING
STANDARDS**

**SPEAKING
UP**



**FUELING
TALENT**

**ACCELERATING
LEARNING**



**ACCELERATING
LEARNING**



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW WE
ARE DRIVING THE SECTOR
FORWARDS**



The professional body for people working and learning in automotive since 1920.



Forward thinking: (left) Autonomous vehicles are being introduced to UK roads for rigorous testing, while (below) Professor Sarah Sharples regards connected and automated mobility as key to future road safety

SAFER MOBILITY

With 1,600 road deaths in the UK last year and another 30,000 seriously injured, Professor Sarah Sharples, Chief Scientific Adviser at the Department for Transport (DfT), described it as a safety crisis.

Sharples highlighted the near-term potential of connectivity, advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) and automated driving to dramatically improve these figures, and praised the Centre for Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CCAV) for driving government and industry partnerships to advance the technologies. Founded in 2015 as a joint venture by the Department for Business and Trade and the DfT, CCAV has so far funded over 130 projects, establishing Zenzic as a key industry-facing delivery partner.

Pressed on which body will regulate UK self-driving, there was no concrete answer, but perhaps a clue from Sharples could be found in her statement that "We need a revolution in the MOT."

DRIVERLESS ROLL-OUT

From a regulatory point of view, there's still a lot of work to be done involving trade-offs between safety and costs, plus accountability and bureaucracy. The timetable for legislation enabling on-road self-driving in the UK without a safety driver is also slipping, and it's now expected to be in place by 2028. However, eye-catching findings from a KPMG study on commercial readiness predicts roll-out in industrial sectors such as mining within 18 months and public transport by 2030.

The desire to get connected autonomous vehicles ready for the market is highlighted by the range of projects, investment and government backing that's helping to shape what the technologies will look like when they eventually make it to market.

"THERE'S STILL A LOT OF WORK TO BE DONE INVOLVING TRADE-OFFS BETWEEN SAFETY AND COSTS"





HANDTOOLS

*Your one-call solution for glass handling
and fitting equipment for automotive*

**NEW WEBSITE
NOW LIVE**

JT HANDTOOLS
Unit 9 Ranskill Court
SHEFFIELD, S9 5 FZ
sales@jthandtools.co.uk
01142 449989
www.jthandtools.co.uk

PROJECT HARLANDER IN BELFAST

One of the UK's leading self-driving pilot studies, Belfast's autonomous shuttle service is funded to the tune of £11m by partners such as BT, Horiba Mira, Angoka, Innovate UK and CCAV. Featuring two 20-seater eVersum electric shuttles running Oxa Driver software, the Harlander project delivers sustainable last-mile connectivity between the Titanic Quarter railway station and Thompson Dock on the privately-owned Belfast Harbour Estate.

With roots in Austria but now expanding across Europe, eVersum is a rising star of the increasingly competitive self-driving shuttle sector, and the new Belfast Harbour service marks its first collaboration with Oxa.

While the autonomous service is currently being offered free of charge to the public, Mike Dawson, People and Digital Transformation Director at Belfast Harbour, reiterated its aim to become commercially viable as soon as possible. "That can only be achieved when the safety driver is removed," he said.

With tourist numbers expected to rise sharply thanks to the recently revamped Titanic Belfast exhibition, Harlander is seen as a vital part of Northern Ireland's sustainable transport future.



SUNDERLAND SAMS

Another trial backed by CCAV and Innovate UK is the Sunderland Advanced Mobility Shuttle (SAMS) project. Operated by Stagecoach and supported by Zenzic, it features a modified Ford E-Transit shuttle using Oxa software to deliver a 5G-connected and autonomous bus service between the Sunderland Interchange, the University of Sunderland's City Campus, and Sunderland Royal Hospital.

"Leveraging the power of 5G technology, the focus of our ambitious project partners is underpinned by an ethos of leaving no one and nowhere behind," said Liz St Louis, Director of Smart Cities at project leader Sunderland City Council.

At CAM Innovators, St Louis reported that SAMS is now running more than 95% autonomously. "My team have been blown away by how good the Oxa technology is," she said. "The minute people go on the vehicle, their perception changes, which was also my experience. There's a societal readiness now, so there are many great use cases in rural areas and seaside resorts."

Though currently still using safety drivers, a key project aim for SAMS is to showcase a secure remote supervision protocol, paving the way for commercial use.

"STUDIES SHOW A 30% FUEL SAVING FOR AUTOMATED VEHICLES OVER HUMAN DRIVERS"



Stay in the loop with changes to government policy and their impact on connected autonomous technology with the IMI at bit.ly/IMI-Policy

MATCHING PERSONALITY TO PERFORMANCE

WHETHER IT'S FOR AFTERSALES CAMPAIGNS OR CLIENT SATISFACTION, CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE IS CRITICAL TO THE AUTOMOTIVE SECTOR. FIND OUT HOW LOTTIE ROBERTS AT DIRECT AFFINITY CX IS DRIVING THE CULTURE

In the world of automotive customer experience, the human voice still holds unmatched power. At Direct Affinity CX, Operations Director Lottie Roberts has made it her mission to ensure that every voice on the end of the line doesn't just sound right, it feels right.

Lottie's role is deceptively simple: match the right person to the right call, whether for sales drives, aftersales campaigns, enquiry qualification or customer satisfaction surveys. But dig a little deeper and you will see it's a philosophy that's transformed how Direct Affinity CX builds, trains and supports its teams.

"Every conversation starts before the phone rings," she says. "It begins with understanding our own people – the agent leading the call. What drives them? How do they handle pressure? How do they naturally connect with others? When we get that right, the whole experience improves for the customer and our clients."

Emotional intelligence

Lottie's work involves much more than team management. It's a philosophy that reshapes hiring,

training and even how success is measured. The Direct Affinity CX team has developed a profiling system that evaluates agents not just on performance metrics but on their interpersonal strengths – qualities such as warmth, patience, listening, consistency and emotional self-awareness.

"Sales calls need energy and resilience," says Lottie. "Aftercare calls demand patience and trust-building. When it comes to complaint handling, you need calmness, empathy and the ability to acknowledge emotion without necessarily agreeing. That's not something you can script; it has to come naturally."

Rather than relying on static metrics such as call time or resolution speed, Lottie and her team use a methodology built on nine key aspects of emotional intelligence. These are embedded in everything from training programmes to post-call evaluations. Listening carefully, responding with genuine understanding, maintaining composure under pressure, picking up subtle changes in tone. It's all about making the customer feel understood.



"We use data and insights, but our biggest asset is our people"

Direct Affinity CX has shifted from a traditional call centre to one that functions more like a purpose-built team of communicators. Training is continual, with masterclasses and coaching that go beyond standard scripts and workflows. Experienced team members are encouraged to refine their style, adapt to different customer moods and stretch their emotional range.

"It's not about perfection," Lottie says. "It's about staying curious and open. Even the best agents grow when they are supported in trying something new."

CX champion

The impact is measurable. Clients report that Direct Affinity CX agents feel like a natural extension of their own brand. Customer satisfaction scores are rising while internal promotions and retention are stronger than ever. But most telling of all is the atmosphere within the team itself: collaborative, motivated and emotionally attuned.

Lottie's influence extends beyond the contact centre floor. She champions career development across the business and has become a visible mentor for young women entering the industry. By embedding emotional intelligence into the core of the company's culture, she's not only helping to shape how agents work but also how they grow.

"In a world racing toward automation, it's easy to forget the value of a real conversation," Lottie says. "Yes, we use data and insights, but our biggest asset is our people."

It's this people-first philosophy that's helping to redefine CX, not just for Direct Affinity CX, but for the future of customer service across the industry.

If you want to build customer relationships that feel real, consistent and deeply human, Lottie and the team at Direct Affinity CX would love to talk. For more information, go to directaffinitycx.com



The Direct Affinity CX call centre in Tenerife

Direct Affinity CX



THE HOW TO SECTION

The IMI is dedicated to empowering automotive professionals to succeed and progress



P60_ MAKE JOB ADVERTS SPARKLE

Find out the secrets to creating a highly effective job ad that attracts the right people and delivers the best results for your business



P62_ HELP YOUR STAFF FULFIL THEIR POTENTIAL

Understand more about the link between happy and fulfilled employees with clear career goals and a successful company



P63_ UNDERSTAND THE USE OF AI IN THE WORKSHOP

Discover the role of AI in the modern workshop and how you can use it to increase productivity and boost your bottom line



P64_ GET THE RIGHT DIAGNOSTIC TOOLS

We show you how to choose from the vast range of diagnostic tools on offer to keep your workshop up to date with the latest vehicle technology

Make job adverts sparkle

An effective job ad can make the difference between hiring genuine talent and a dead weight

WORDS_JENNIFER WEBB

'Level 3 Technician wanted, must have five years of experience, bonus available. We are a family-run business. Are you hard working and..." Sound familiar? So many job adverts in the aftermarket are the same, all with the same sentences, phrases and sentiment, and all with the same levels of failure.

Gone are the days when a company could post a simple message saying, 'We have a vacancy. This is what we are looking for...', with technicians who match the criteria calling the boss and going in for a trial.

In today's market, there could be five other garages in the area all looking for a new recruit, so it's a real competition to attract talent. As a business, you need to be switched on to understand exactly how to do that.

Top talent tips

Using years of experience and regular discussions with technicians, workshop managers and service and parts advisers, we are experts in understanding what makes a great job advert. Many of those discussions boil down to four key pieces of advice.

Be real

Match your advert to your business. If your workshop could do with a bit of TLC, is cold in the winter and not the fanciest of places, then match this to your advert. Call out to the people who want that. If you are big on presentation details, your gloves match your branding colours, and you are proud of your reception area, then put this across in the advert. The techs who want to work in a traditional workshop will be drawn to one type of advert, while those who get excited about white workshop floors will be attracted to another.

State the salary

'Competitive salary' is a waste of words so always mention pay. However, be aware that you may need to pay more to your new recruit than your existing staff, which could be awkward as you may need to give your existing staff pay rises so they don't get annoyed when they see the advert.

So advertise the pay with a bracket of about £5,000 – for example, £29,000 to £34,000. If you advertise the salary as £25,000 to

"IT'S A REAL COMPETITION TO ATTRACT TALENT, AND AS A BUSINESS, YOU NEED TO BE SWITCHED ON TO UNDERSTAND EXACTLY HOW TO DO THAT"



£40,000 then you look like you are not sure, resulting in applicants not having much faith in the business.

One advert, one role

A few years ago, there was a trend for garages to advertise a few different job adverts at once to see what interest they could catch. Frankly, this is because they would employ anyone. This would usually be a service tech then a senior tech with different salaries. This very rarely works but costs you twice as much. Just be clear on what you want and do one excellent advert.

Don't copy

You may think another firm's ad works really well, but don't be tempted to copy it. If you see their advert, it's because they haven't found someone, so why would copying their advert mean that you will? The techs will see this and you will both look bad.

It can be really tough to bring in new people, especially in a market as challenging as automotive. But if you want to succeed in recruiting the right people for your business, make sure that your job ads are unique, honest and clear to get the best results.

Jennifer Webb is the owner of HR Vitals, specialising in automotive business support



THE IMI'S EIGHT-STEP GUIDE TO MAKING YOUR JOB ADVERTS MORE EFFECTIVE

01 Be transparent about wages

Avoid vague terms like 'competitive salary' and clearly state the pay range so applicants know what to expect before applying.

02 List genuine benefits

Standard holiday allowance and free fruit aren't real perks – they are basic workplace norms. Only highlight benefits that go beyond the legal minimum, such as extra paid leave, wellness programmes or learning opportunities.

03 Ditch the 'family feel' cliché

Many candidates see this as a red flag. Instead, describe your actual workplace culture, whether it's collaborative, supportive or fast-paced.

04 Clarify working hours and flexibility

Be upfront about shift patterns, remote work options and flexibility. This helps applicants to determine if the role fits their needs.

05 Keep the description clear and concise

Avoid vague wording or unnecessary fluff. Ensure that responsibilities and expectations are easy to understand and leave no room for misinterpretation. Also, remove acronyms, keeping it clear for everyone.

06 Match experience to the role

If a job is entry level, don't ask for five years of experience. Set realistic expectations to attract the right candidates.

07 Avoid phrasing that deters applicants

Saying 'must handle stress well' makes your workplace sound overwhelming. If the role is high pressure then phrase it constructively, such as "fast-paced environment with tight deadlines".

08 Remember: people first

Ensure your workplace openly communicates if you are disability confident, LGBTQIA+ friendly and neuro-inclusive. It's essential that potential applicants know they are welcome and will be supported. If you promote inclusivity, make sure your application process reflects that and offer adjustments and accessibility for those who need it. It's not just about saying it but showing it through action.

For more details about being a Disability Confident employer go to bit.ly/IMI-Disability-Confident-Employer

To find out more about being an LGBTQ-friendly employer go to bit.ly/IMI-LGBTQ-Friendly

HOW TO...

Help your staff fulfil their potential

Happier employees mean a more successful business, so find out how to help everyone in your company achieve their career goals

WORDS_JENNIFER WEBB

Let's start with some honesty: no one has the ultimate answer to how to support your staff. All the answers need to come from interactions with your employees. This is because there isn't a one-size-fits-all approach to staff support. Since everyone is different, then all employers and employees will be different, and so different approaches will be needed to support different people.

Being different means that our needs, motivations, desires and happiness come from different things. Having established that 'different' is the key word here, how do you establish what's unique to each person?

Start from the beginning

Helping your employees achieve their full potential starts at the recruitment stage. So take the opportunity to ask them about their motivations, what they liked about their previous employer, what they liked about their previous job, what areas could have been improved, why they chose that job, why they chose to leave, and why they applied to work at your place.

Of course, not everyone is going to be completely honest with you and they may try to give you what they think are the right answers, but that in itself is interesting! So make



sure you take note of what they think you want to hear.

Top-down approach

Next comes an assessment of the day-to-day life of the boss and asking what you can do to support staff. Every time you consider motivating an employee, driving business efficiency or promotion, remember to do something for their wellbeing as well. This isn't about starting up Pizza Fridays, it's about long-term employee wellbeing.

Again, what one employee values will be different to another. One will appreciate getting home earlier to put his kids to bed, while another will

value a gardener cutting their grass for the summer.

For you to engage properly with your staff and release their full potential, you need to make sure they are treated like humans and not machines. People need rest, recuperation and wellbeing. If you can create an environment that listens to your employees, helps them to stay in good condition and empowers them, then you are on to a winner.

Power up

So how do you empower your staff? First priority is to get everything out of your head. If you hold all the

key information about your company then your staff will always need to come to you for answers, interrupt when you are busy, and second-guess your choices. This is bad for potential.

So get all your processes documented, starting with the introduction of regular training groups, such as monthly 'This is how we do things' sessions and one-to-ones, inviting your staff to give you their opinions in person, in writing or anonymously. A third party can help with this as staff can sometimes find it easier to talk to someone independent.

"DIFFERENT APPROACHES WILL BE NEEDED TO SUPPORT DIFFERENT PEOPLE"

Reap the rewards

On the face of it, the answer to the question of how to guide your staff towards reaching their full potential is simple: the more emphasis you place on understanding them, the more likely you are to help them achieve their goals. The challenge comes when you put that answer into practice, but for you, your staff and your business, it's well worth taking on the challenge.

Jennifer Webb is the owner of HR Vitals, which specialises in automotive business support

HOW TO...

Understand the use of AI in the workshop

Artificial intelligence isn't here to replace you.
It could make your life easier – and probably already is

WORDS: GRAHAME PELLIS FIMI

The AI cat is well and truly out of the bag and there's no stuffing it back in. But before you start imagining a robot apprentice rolling around the workshop with a torque wrench, it's worth clearing up what AI actually means in the automotive world.

Today, AI tools usually refer to a Large Language Model (LLM) such as ChatGPT. These aren't self-aware robots or magical thinking machines, they are clever systems trained on vast amounts of data, designed to spot patterns in language. The result? They can predict what word or phrase should come next in a conversation or a sentence – like your phone's autocorrect cranked up to 11.

You may be thinking, 'OK, but what's that go to do with the workshop?'. Well, we hate to break it to you, but the technology is probably hard at work in your business already. If you use social media, Microsoft applications or are involved with MOT testing, it's very likely that you are using AI. It powers everything from your newsfeed and spam filters to detecting fraud in the MOT testing service. It is not always obvious, but it's there.

Testing times

One organisation that's boosted its productivity with AI is the DVSA. It uses a form



of AI known as clustering to help it analyse MOT data more effectively. This type of system groups together similar patterns across thousands of test records, which makes it quicker to spot anomalies.

The technology enables the DVSA to process far more data than ever before and assign risk scores to individual test stations. Sites that show unusual patterns such as odd pass rates or inconsistent test times can then be flagged for further investigation.

This approach has helped the DVSA to pinpoint potential fraud more effectively and highlight testers who may not be following the correct procedures, whether that's due to deliberate misuse or simply a requirement for further training.

"AS THE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPS, AI WILL BECOME A FAR GREATER PART OF THE WORKSHOP"

As the technology develops, AI will become a far greater part of the workshop. Many garage websites now use AI-driven chatbots to answer basic questions, book services or guide customers through pricing. These may be simple ready-baked tools from website builders, but they use the same AI technology as more complex systems.

Diagnose this

Diagnostics is another big area for AI. Some high-end scan systems now use AI-style logic to recommend likely causes

based on fault codes, live data and known fix histories, with tools from Autel, Snap-on, Bosch and others already including this. As these systems learn more, they will become a lot more helpful, especially with complex EV and ADAS faults, and will go on to develop curated service packages specific to how the motorist uses their vehicle.

Even record keeping could be changed by AI. Whether it's workshop performance or analysing customer data, the technology can help to pick up patterns, which could mean noticing when a certain type of failure keeps cropping up or spotting when a certain make or model is likely to return with the same issue.

No, you aren't being replaced

The use of AI in the workshop isn't about taking over. It's about more support, increased speed and smarter tools. Whether it's a diagnostic machine that guides more accurate first-fix repairs or a website that talks to your customers, AI is a small piece of a bigger and more productive change.

We're not handing the keys over to the robots just yet, but the more we understand what these tools are and what they are capable of, the more effectively we can use them to create a more inclusive and profitable workplace.

HOW TO...

Get the right diagnostic tools

Invest in the correct technology and it will make your business more profitable and streamline your work

WORDS GRAHAME PELLIS FIMI

In today's workshop, what's plugged into the OBD port can be a gamechanger. The correct diagnostic tool can make the difference between a quick, profitable job and a head-scratcher that eats up half the day. But with so many options, how do you make sure you have the right kit for the job?

It used to be enough to have a scan tool that could read and clear fault codes. But with most cars packed full of driver aids, complex electronics and security features, that doesn't cut it anymore. We're now seeing systems that not only need diagnosing, but also calibrating, coding and unlocking, and not every tool on the market can do it.

Basic instinct

Let's start with the simple stuff. There's still a place in the workshop for the straightforward handheld code reader, the kind of tool you can pick up for under £100. These are handy for quick jobs, especially on older vehicles, and are often used to read EOBD data during a service.

The handheld code reader is easy to use, cheap to replace and ideal for front-of-house or fast-fit-style diagnostics, but not so good for anything beyond engine or emissions.

Most will struggle to talk to systems such as ABS, airbags, climate control or ADAS.

The go-to tool is the mid-range, multi-make diagnostic system, which most independents will be using. This is kit from companies such as Autel, Launch and Delphi, with prices ranging from £1,000 up to several thousand depending on the brand, features and licence options.

These tools will cover a wide range of makes and models, and usually give you good access across most systems, from engine, transmission and ABS to airbags, body control and sometimes ADAS features. They will also usually support service resets, DPF regens and key programming (with certain limits), with some having guided diagnostic paths, test plans and live data viewing with graphing features.

Where these tools differ is in the depth of access, which is crucial when it comes to deciding what to buy since not all tools will cover all makes equally. Some will be brilliant on VAG but weak on BMW, while others might be great on Renault but struggle with Honda. Some will also have the option of 'Pass Through', which allows access to security data on the vehicle via dealer portals.

Access all areas

Dealer tools are where things start to get serious and expensive. They give full access to every system on the car, including coding, software updates, security access and factory-level diagnostic procedures. These are used by most of the main dealers, and in many cases, they are the only tools that can properly communicate with the newest vehicles, especially for coding new modules or carrying out ADAS calibrations.

But there's a catch: to get a dealer tool, you will usually need approval from the manufacturer plus a subscription to their diagnostic portal. And you will also need to buy their hardware or at least meet their software requirements, which might mean running a specific laptop set-up or virtual machine.

These tools can cost anywhere from £500 to several thousand pounds to get started, with subscriptions running into hundreds per year, per brand.

For specialists, such as garages that only work on BMWs, VWs or Audis, dealer tools are a no-brainer. But for a general repair shop, covering every make with dealer tools is almost impossible. That's why most workshops will rely on a solid multi-brand tool as their



"MOST WORKSHOPS WILL RELY ON A SOLID MULTI-BRAND TOOL AND INVEST IN ONE OR TWO DEALER TOOLS FOR THE MARQUES THEY SEE MOST OFTEN"



main bit of kit and invest in one or two dealer tools for the marques they see most often.

Dial-up diagnostics

One area that's emerged over the last few years is remote diagnostics. With more and more vehicles needing coding, flashing or security access, workshops have started turning to third-party services, which can dial in remotely and carry out the work using your

equipment or even theirs.

Companies such as Hella Gutmann, Launch and a few UK-based independents now offer full remote support set-ups. You connect their hardware to the car, they log in over the internet, then they run the diagnostic session for you live. This could be anything from coding in a new control unit to calibrating ADAS or resetting a locked-down ECU.

For smaller workshops or

mobile techs, this kind of support can be a lifesaver. You don't need to invest thousands in a dealer tool or spend hours registering for portals as someone else will handle it. The flipside is that you often rely on their schedule and, depending on the provider, costs can vary. Some work on a pay-per-job basis while others run a subscription model.

That said, it's a handy back-up when your usual tools hit a

"WE'RE NOW SEEING SYSTEMS THAT NOT ONLY NEED DIAGNOSING, BUT ALSO CALIBRATING, CODING AND UNLOCKING"

brick wall and a good option for keeping customers in-house rather than sending them back to the dealer.

Blue sky thinking

Another big shift is towards cloud-based diagnostics. We're starting to see more tools that run directly off the internet or store data in the cloud for analysis, reporting or sharing across multiple sites.

The advantage here is that you are not stuck with a single machine. A technician can start a job on one tablet then pick it up later on a laptop or different device. Some systems allow workshop owners or senior techs to oversee live sessions from another location, which can be a real help with training or quality control.

Cloud-based tools also tend to have better integration with service history, parts ordering and data platforms such as Autodata or HaynesPro. Some even offer guided diagnostics that adapt in real time based on the fault codes, like a digital assistant walking you through the job. The catch is that you need a stable internet connection and some tools won't function without it. That can be a pain if you are working mobile or in a rural area where wifi isn't exactly lightning fast.

Picking the right diagnostic tool for the work you do is critical. Choose correctly and it could be the gateway to a smoother workflow and a more profitable business.

DAVID CHEADLE FIMI

An indirect pathway into automotive didn't prevent this lifelong IMI member from building a successful independent family business

How did your career start?

My father didn't want me to go into the motor trade. He'd had experience of the business and several friends in the industry, and didn't think it was suitable for me. So he encouraged me to do a mechanical engineering degree as a student apprentice. At the end, I got a job with John Thompson-Kennicott, a manufacturing firm.

In that job I had a company car, a Mk1 Cortina [pictured], and they sent me all over the country as a commissioning engineer. But I wanted to earn more money, so I gave it up and went back to college to do A-levels to get into university and study dentistry. I had quite a few dentist friends and they were earning a lot of money, so I thought I'd try that.

What was your journey into the auto sector?

Unfortunately, my father died very suddenly from a heart attack – he was only 58. I'd only been back at college for two months. I continued the course but because of all the upset and looking after my mother, I didn't get good enough grades. That's when I started my business, which is now known as Cheadle Motors.

For the first 12 months I worked from my garage at home. I knew a large number of people and gradually built the business up. I just enjoyed it so much. It was my hobby.



How did you switch your business from a hobby to a career?

I built up a lot of knowledge and had sufficient tooling at home – I would just buy things as I went along. Then I got some very old premises in Wolverhampton, which I rented from the local council. Interestingly, Clyno cars were produced in the same building.

I started the business in 1970, got married in 1971, and the day that I came back from my honeymoon, I found this place and moved in. The business was never very big and the most amount of employees we ever had was five, which included at least one apprentice.

What challenges did you face during your career?

There were many ups and downs. The first big challenge was in 1974 with the coal miners' strike. It was a

“THE IMI IS NOW MORE IMPORTANT THAN EVER TO HELP PEOPLE KEEP UP WITH NEW TECHNOLOGY”

three-day week with people patrolling the streets to make sure you weren't using any electricity, so there were no power tools or electric lighting. I still have the gas lamps in the workshop.

Why did you start focusing on Japanese cars?

I'd go to car auctions almost every week. I loved meeting people and made a lot of friends. I'd travel all over the country buying cars. I specialised in really low-mileage, one-owner cars. Then, when Austin Rover started producing the Triumph Acclaim in 1981,



I saw the light. It was basically a Honda, so the vehicles were reliable. That's when I started specialising in Japanese cars.

How has being a long-term member of the IMI helped you?

In the beginning, I went back to college to do my automotive training. Although I knew what I was doing, I wanted to gain more qualifications. I was very aware of the reputation of motor dealers and wanted to be regarded as a professional. The IMI had training courses in addition to what I was doing at college, and I could really see the value of that. I'm now an IMI Fellow.

What advice would you give to someone entering the industry?

I'd say become a member of the IMI for its support. The IMI is now more important than ever to help people keep up with new technology.

To feature in our next edition, email james.scoltock@thinkpublishing.co.uk

STARTING FROM THE BACK?

REVERSING
IN

AUTONOMOUS VEHICLES_P52
THE SELF-DRIVING REVOLUTION



REAL-WORLD KNOWLEDGE_P46
INSIDE THE KIA EV3



THE BIG INTERVIEW_P44
IMI PRESIDENT JIM SAKER

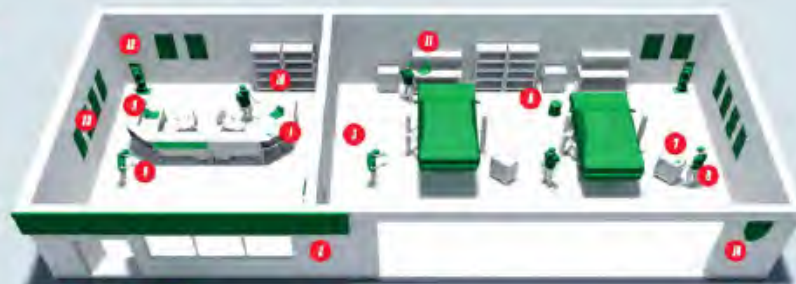


INSIDE AN INDEPENDENT_P20
MISSION MOTORSPORT



Looking for support beyond the barrel?

We're not just about what's under the oil cap. We can offer tailored support and trusted partnerships to grow your business.



1 Castrol Guarantee

2 Castrol Branding



1 Castrol Service Facebook Community



1 Castrol Social Media Support



1 Castrol Digital Presence



1 Castrol Dispensers



1 Castrol FastScan



1 Castrol Workwear

Auto3
Castrol Service Consultancy

IMI INSTITUTE OF THE MOTOR INDUSTRY

GarageHive

PROVQ

purple

1 Castrol Partners



1 Castrol Webshop



1 Castrol Digital Marketing Platform



1 Castrol Online Training



1 Castrol Point of Sale



1 Castrol Promotions



1 Castrol Accreditation

Explore the benefits of our partners & digital offerings



Connect with your customers online & put yourself on the map with Google Business



Turn eVHCs into a Revenue-Boosting Machine with Auto3!!!



Drive traffic to your business with Castrol Service Locations



Create complete efficiency with GarageHive's Garage Management System



Attract new profitable business by partnering with Garage Services Online



You can dress for success with The Purple Company's Castrol Service range



All your branding needs in one place with Castrol's digital marketing platform, Aprimo



Unlock your full potential with Castrol Service Consultancy by Tim Benson



Quality apprenticeship recruitment and training solutions with ProVQ



Engage customers on Social Media



Achieve qualifications and search for job opportunities through the Institute of the Motor Industry (IMI) to boost your credibility and career



Join the Castrol network - No annual fees, just your commitment to use and promote Castrol!



Official Workshop Partner



REGISTER

Call 0800 371910 (Option 4) or email sales@theracegroup.co.uk or scan the QR code on the right to find out how we can help energise your workshop

Who are Bosch Car Service?



BOSCH
Service



Car Service

Bosch Car Service is your trusted partner for automotive care from the Bosch brand. With a nationwide network of expert technicians at over 400 garages in the UK, you can be safe in knowing that Bosch provides industry leading technology and training, quality Bosch parts and a commitment to protected quality care. In the light of this, Bosch Car Service are dedicated to ensuring your safety and comfort on the road.

www.boschcarservice.co.uk

For everything your car needs.