For Auto Shop Owners Who Want To Grow Their Profits!

HOW TO GET PROFITABLE FAST!

How To Solve The 10 Biggest Challenges Holding Your Auto Shop Business Back From Maximum Growth and Profitability

James Mitchell
Australia's #1 Automotive Business Growth Expert
CEO of Workshop Software

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Introduction

If you are reading this book, it's probably because you are the owner or operator of an automotive workshop and you're trying to work out how you can make your business grow, with more profits and less complexity.

You are almost certainly looking for solutions – new strategies and ideas that you can implement right away to make your business more streamlined and efficient.

You may also be at the stage in your business where it's time to take it to the next level. You are probably tired of chasing up details (that should be automated), using systems that are out-dated and, above all, tired of watching lost opportunities falling through the "cracks" of your business operations.

If any of these thoughts resonate with you and your business, this is the right book for you.

My goal is to offer you solutions to the problems and challenges you face in your business, along with new and innovative ways to solve the most common problems that you experience in your auto workshop.

Here are a couple of thought-provoking questions to consider as you read further into this book:

1. Is your business growing at the rate you had hoped for?

Maybe you started off with a small, easily-manageable business and then had a period of consistent growth. As you enjoyed more business success, you may have expanded further and taken on more staff. Perhaps now you are finding that your business is getting to the point where you need better systems to run it. You are probably looking for ways to streamline the operations of your workshop.

It's very likely that you are facing similar types of challenges to the ones many other workshop owners are experiencing on a daily basis.

2. Do you wish you had more time and energy to focus on what you do best?

Perhaps you started your own business because you wanted to work in car repairs and focus more on the operations of the workshop. Maybe you are a great technician but running the business isn't your core expertise. You may be finding that as your business grows, you have to give more time and attention to the business aspects, rather than the actual car repair side.

Many shop owners I speak with assume that because they are experts in the technical side of the business, they will also be good at growing the business. Unfortunately,

things don't work exactly as they had planned and many businesses fail because of that type of thinking.

Your core business and your area of expertise is servicing and fixing vehicles. However, the day-to-day running of your business – administration, record-keeping, communication and accounting – often takes up a lot of your time, making you less efficient as a result.

In a perfect world, you would have a system to make those areas of your business easier to manage.

These are the top 10 biggest business challenges that hold most shop owners back from taking their business to a new and more profitable level:

1. "We don't have an easy and reliable way of tracking vehicle information and history."
2. "We spend a lot of time writing or typing job stories."
3. "We need better ways of communicating with our clients."
4. "How can we make sure we aren't under or over booking the business?"
5. "Is there a way of making sure our mechanics are charging all of their time?"
6. "We don't always know the exact status of a job."
7. "We are constantly looking up sell prices for parts."
8. "It's a problem remembering who we owe money to and when to pay them – and then

> we have to load electronic payments manually into our bank software."
> 9. "Working out GST and BAS at the end of each quarter is a nightmare."
> 10. "We are using a generic system which is not meeting our growth needs."

In this book, I will be discussing the scenarios in which these challenges can present themselves and the solutions that will enable you to better streamline your business, making it more efficient and, in turn, more profitable.

You may be asking yourself, how it is that I know so much about the challenges that you are experiencing in your workshop.

I have been involved in the Automotive Software industry as the CEO of Autosoft Pty Ltd and Workshop Software Pty Ltd, Australia's #1 Operations Software for Auto Workshop Owners, for over two decades. Over the years, my team and I have personally worked with hundreds, possibly even thousands, of workshop owners, who have come to us asking for help to solve their operational challenges.

This book you hold in your hands is the culmination of the countless hours that I, personally, have spent talking with our customers about where they started in their business and how they have grown so quickly and efficiently by using smart systems across their auto workshop operations.

If this book strongly relates to the current state of your business – and you have a deep desire to grow your business and profits with ease and efficiency – then I or any of my team would be happy to have a chat with you at your convenience.

To your success,

James Mitchell
Australia's #1 Business Growth Expert for the Automotive Industry

Do You Have My Vehicle Information?

Let's begin with one of the most common challenges faced by auto workshop owners on a daily basis: tracking customer vehicle information and history.

The ability to track vehicle information is critical to the financial success of your business because it is this information that allows you to provide a tailored service to your customers. When you can track vehicle information and history, you can provide expert service not only at the point of sale, but prior to that time as well.

You will also be able to provide professional after-care service with ease, such as service reminders and courtesy notices to ensure your customers are happy with the service you and your staff provided.

If you can optimise your systems to a high level of efficiency, you will position your auto workshop in such a way that your profits will be maximised. Only then can you take advantage of growth opportunities.

With an integrated information system implemented in your business, your mechanics will have access to the required information they need at the press of a

button, allowing immediate access to view and update a customer's vehicle history.

With this type of immediate information access, productivity and efficiency is effortlessly increased because there is no wasted time trying to find basic information. Plus, the risk of receiving incorrect information is virtually eliminated.

The experience your customers have with your front line staff is they remember, and in their minds will have just as much importance as the job you did for them on their vehicles.

To allow your staff to do a good job for you in front of your customers, they must have this easy and efficient access to your customer's vehicle information and history. This will allow them to answer questions and take payments and bookings without any issues. Remember, the smoother the information flow within your auto workshop, the more efficient your staff will be.

Without easy access to this essential information your auto workshop can lose both time and money.

Without efficient access to your customer's vehicle information and without the smooth communication that this efficiency will create, your customer's trust of your business can be severely impacted. When the trust your customers have in your business is compromised, you run the risk of losing their business for good.

When your customers are left wondering things like: *"I have been coming here for years, why don't they know anything about my car?"*, this creates the opening in their mind of considering choosing a different auto workshop next time they need a repair on their vehicle.

Here is one of the many stories we have received from auto workshop owners highlighting why simple access to vehicle history and information can be such an important profit maker for your business.

Kyle was a regular customer at a well-known and well-established auto workshop. He had taken his car there for every service since he purchased it and they always did a great job. He was a loyal customer and had no intention of ever going anywhere else for his auto repairs and maintenance.

Kyle's wife was planning to use his car for a long drive and he decided that he would get a full service, just so he could be sure that everything would be fine for her journey.

He couldn't get a booking at his regular auto workshop so he had to choose another one he had used a long time ago. He wasn't thrilled at having to choose another auto workshop since he was used to using the one closest to his home, but this shop he had used once before and he vaguely remembered that he had a good experience with them.

When he arrived at the shop, he immediately noticed how efficient they were. Everything was orderly and everyone seemed very calm and relaxed. This was quite a contrast to what he was used to, because his usual shop seemed fairly chaotic much of the time.

He noticed the phone was ringing consistently and the receptionist was handling all the enquiries with ease, which was in stark contrast to what he was used to. The receptionist at his regular shop seemed a little inconsistent, having to ask various staff members about repairs related to each vehicle. He had noticed that she would often place customers on hold and usually looked quite stressed.

At this new auto workshop, when he asked the receptionist a few questions related to the job on his vehicle, she effortlessly pressed a few buttons on her keyboard and was able to pull up the information she needed. She knew what make, model and colour his car was, and mentioned that last time he came in his disc brakes were serviced. As he had only been there once before, about two years ago, the fact that she had this information at her fingertips was very impressive. Kyle immediately knew he had come to a professional and trustworthy business.

A few days after the service, he received an email thanking him for bringing his vehicle in. The email included a printable voucher for a discount on his next service. A few days after that, Kyle received a

card in his letterbox asking if he was happy with the service and reminding him of his discount voucher.

When the time came for his next service, he used the voucher. At this point, he and his wife decided to permanently change to this new auto workshop that they were so impressed with.

The combination of the accuracy and efficiency in which his vehicle information was retrieved, along with their professional after-service contact, won Kyle over as a new happy customer.

As you can see from this story, it is critical that you have easily accessible and detailed information about your clients' vehicles.

Just some of the information you will need immediate access includes:

- Vehicle identification number (VIN)
- Engine number
- Model details including model code & series

… and technical information about that particular vehicle.

All of this data allows you to work out what needs to be done on the vehicle and the exact type and number of parts that will be needed for its repair.

The key is making sure the required customer information is stored correctly and is easily retrievable. If the data is hard to access or stored in different places, the efficiency of your business decreases, causing a loss of time and money while you and your staff are hunting around trying to find those details. It also looks very bad in the eyes of your customers.

When it comes to vehicle history, there is an endless list of valuable answers that are useful to have at the press of a button.

Here are a few more examples of the valuable information you would want access to:

- *"When did this vehicle last have its brakes checked?"*
- *"When did this vehicle have a coolant flush?"*
- *"When does the next scheduled service for this vehicle fall due?"*

Here is a common scenario to consider: What happens when a customer with a warranty comes into your workshop claiming that a repair was done over nine months ago? How long would it take you to find out whether it really was nine months ago or maybe more than twelve?

Is that type of information currently stored in an overflowing filing cabinet? Or in a pile of logbooks? Or somewhere in an out-dated filing system? Or on a

computer system that simply lacks the capability to find the information you need?

It could take quite some time to find what you need. Every minute that it takes to search records for that information is costing your business time and money. It is critical that you have instant access to every customer's vehicle history information.

> ! **A simple system will start your journey towards maximum profits**

What it all boils down to is this: Inefficiency is an expensive way to run a business. Time spent searching for files and figures is a major profit leak. Without an organised approach to information access it will be very difficult to run a business that can maximise profits.

By using a simple, effective system, you will stop this revenue leak and retain customers like Kyle, who abandon their long-time auto workshops because they were won over by another running a highly efficient businesses with streamlined information systems.

Accurate Invoice = Happy Customer

The importance of job stories to your business and to your customers cannot be underestimated. The way your invoice is presented has a significant impact on the relationship between you and your customer.

A professionally presented invoice strengthens the trust your customer has in your business. Conversely, an invoice that is difficult to understand can damage the relationship.

A transparent invoice that accurately itemises each repair makes it immediately clear what work has been done and how long it took. When you empower your customers to understand the costs involved with their repairs, you also help them understand that they are receiving a valuable service for a fair price. They usually don't feel the need to ask additional questions and you won't have to spend time justifying the invoice because of the way it's presented.

If the invoice received by your customer is difficult to understand, they will rightly ask questions and place great emphasis on clear explanations. Any uncertainty that your customer has about their invoice will threaten the trust they have in your auto workshop. They may

start to question whether or not you deserve their return business.

Having to justify the work you've done for your customer by spending time walking them through the invoice is time that you could have saved by providing an invoice that was pre-printed with detailed and accurate information.

If you did not work on the job, a clear invoice will save you the awkward situation of having to find the mechanic who did the job and then asking him in front of your customer what he means and why. Similarly, you don't want to have to chase the administration person to find out the reason for the cost of a certain item.

Having to chase down this information becomes an unnecessary and expensive exercise that makes your auto workshop appear disorganised.

> **!** **The way in which your customer perceives the control that you have in your business directly relates to their trust in you.**

(Please read that last line a couple of times so that it sinks in.)

The story below demonstrates exactly how the way you invoice can impact your customers and the relationship they have with your business.

Like many families, the Wilson family – Karla and Jack – own two vehicles. One is a stock standard Suzuki Swift, the other an ageing but well-loved Holden Jackaroo. Karla drives one vehicle, and Jack drives the other. They each have their own preferences for vehicle maintenance service providers.

Karla prefers an auto workshop run by a family friend whom she trusts and has known for a long time, while her husband prefers another. However, as he works long hours as a sales rep, it is often Karla who does the picking up, dropping off and invoice payments for the cars. The place she prefers is small, busy and well, quaint to say the least. It is what she likes and it is where she feels comfortable.

On Karla's last visit, which was a regular service, the invoice was surprisingly more expensive than usual. This was okay by her. She understands that costs rarely go down; however, she did want to check that it was correct. The account had no details on it for Karla to refer to so she waited to speak to the receptionist at the front desk.

The receptionist was busy with ringing phones, a queue of waiting customers and a stack of papers in front of her. She couldn't find what she needed and to add to her mounting problems, the owner of the business was nowhere to be found. He had been working since 8am; it was now 4.45pm and he was on his first and only break of the day.

When Karla finally got to the front of the queue after 5pm the receptionist didn't have the details of the work that was done and the mechanic responsible had gone home. So, Karla paid the invoice, partly because she was in a hurry, and partly because she felt extremely sorry for the receptionist who really was doing the best she could under the circumstances. However, at that moment, she decided it was the last time she would use that auto workshop.

It was a place she had trusted for more than ten years; however that long-term trust was erased in just one experience. Even though she had known the receptionist for quite some time, she no longer felt comfortable returning to that auto workshop.

Of course, Karla doesn't know how an auto workshop works, but she, like everyone else has concerns – that if the receptionist can't find the most basic of information, what else can't she find? What else might have been overlooked?

Karla's next service was done at an auto workshop the next town over. It was a reasonable drive and less convenient. The business was about the same size, and was just as busy. A very confident young receptionist told her that the car would be ready in about two hours, and if anything changed they would let her know.

After an hour and a half she received a phone call to say she actually needed two new tyres, which she

agreed to, and she was also told the car would take a little longer than expected because of the tyres. After another 45 minutes Karla received an SMS message to say the car was ready.

When she went to pick up her car, the receptionist showed her the invoice, which was itemised and clear – the amount due was more than she expected, however the paperwork explained what the costs were and it all seemed very fair. She happily paid her invoice and now this auto workshop, which is still an inconvenient distance for her to drive, services both of the family vehicles because she feels that the inconvenience is worth the trip.

In just one visit this new auto workshop created a trusting bond with their new customer through efficiency and invoice transparency.

This new auto workshop gained Karla's trust simply by having an organised and streamlined system that made her feel secure in her decision to use their services. They are maximising profits and winning new business.

Typically in an auto workshop, there are jobs that are repeated over and over again, requiring the same notes to be manually recorded each time.

Here's a very simple example: when you are doing vehicle services, you would most likely check the vehicle's brakes and report the wear on the front and rear pads.

You'd probably write a note on each individual invoice, something to the effect of: "For your information – the front pads are 20% worn and there is 30% wear on the rear pads."

Your customer will appreciate that specific notes were recorded as you or your staff were inspecting their vehicle. However, the problem lies in the fact that you have to write that note for *every* vehicle on *every* service or check.

The same repetitive note-taking happens when it's time to itemise the services and charges.

Some computerised systems might allow you to type in notes and service details, but that can be a time-consuming exercise – especially if, like the vast majority of mechanics, you happen to be a two-finger typist.

Typing in repetitive details only slows down your productivity, reducing the time you could be spending working on growing your business. Even if you delegate some of this note taking and data entry to your office assistant, there are much more productive ways to leverage your staff's time, rather than doing these types of repetitive tasks.

The ideal situation would be to have a system where you can create your own job codes and stories and be able to add them at the touch of a button – a massive time

and money saver. A simple set up is available and can make your life as an auto workshop owner so much easier.

The story earlier in this chapter highlights how easy it is to lose business because of an inefficient system that doesn't create a sense of trust between your auto workshop and your customers. The story also highlights how easy it can be to win new customers with an efficient system that makes them feel secure about using your services. One business lost a long-term customer all because she didn't understand the invoice, and when she needed assistance to clarify the costs, the staff member she eventually spoke to could not help her.

She felt frustrated and lost the trust she once had in the auto workshop. Even though she had relied upon the same shop for many years, this experience pushed her to take her business elsewhere.

When your customers understand what they are paying for they are much more likely to pay without questioning you and they are much more likely to return to your auto workshop time and time again.

Chapter 3
Connect With Me or Lose Me!

With new innovations in technology, customers now expect to be communicated with on a constant basis in real time. Customer expectations from service providers in terms of how they are communicated with have never been so high.

This expectation has created a communication void between many workshop owners and their customers, because the workshop has not implemented proactive communication methods to keep their customers updated on a regular basis.

Tools such as email, text, and smart phones have now become the mediums in which your customers expect to hear from you. Your customers will appreciate a text message that reminds them of their booking. Not only does it remind them to bring their car in, it will also prompt them to let you know if they can no longer keep the booking.

This prompting gives your staff the opportunity to book another customer into the open space, in turn keeping your shop running both efficiently and profitably by ensuring your booking level is maintained.

Communication is now so simple it is critical that your auto workshop uses it to the full extent of its capabilities. From bookings to promotions, digital technology is a key asset to your business success.

The advantage of this shift in communication may at first seem daunting, but it actually can be leveraged to your advantage. If you are not connecting with your customers on an ongoing basis you are not adequately maintaining your relationship with them, which will impact both your short and long term profits.

In the first chapter, we saw how a customer named Kyle was lost by one auto workshop and won by another thanks to better communication. This highlights the importance of communication to your customers and to your business.

Below is a true story that demonstrates the incredible opportunities effective communication can create.

> Danni has three children that she raises alone as well as a full time job. She is extremely busy and operates her life on a very tight budget just to be able to get by. Her car really is one of her most important assets. It is crucial to her life – without it she would not be able to keep her job and she would not be able to take her children all the places they need to go.

Tim, who manages the auto workshop shop Danni uses, has a very simple yet fully integrated information and communication system, that makes it easy for him to see when his customers are due for a service.

Danni had received her reminder notice telling her that her next service was due, however money was tight this particular month and she decided to skip the service. She knew how important a service was, but she just couldn't find the money.

Tim decided to send a follow up reminder to the customers who had vehicles that were overdue for a service. He decided to make a special offer with this reminder to see if he could bring in additional revenue. He couldn't afford to discount the price so, instead, he offered the opportunity to pay the invoice in two instalments. Danni realised this offer made the service affordable for her, and she booked in immediately.

This cost Tim nothing, yet brought him in a return customer he otherwise would not have won over this time around.

Your workshop operations can be set up to enable email, SMS, fax or mail notices to be produced and sent to customers.

You may currently have systems that can provide the information you and your customers need, but you might find that this information is stored in various locations or systems – very little integration often exists. This lack of integration is what fragments your systems and makes communication from your auto workshop to your customers seem difficult. One streamlined system makes communication easy and opens up new opportunities for businesses to grow.

Without an integrated and simple system Tim would not have been able to communicate with Danni in a way that would win her business.

Here's another example of how a streamlined system helped turn potential revenue into real, measurable business growth.

Todd owns and runs an auto workshop that had struggled to turn a profit for the last three years. He was working hard, the shop was busy enough, but it wasn't bringing in as many customers as he needed to generate the sort of revenue he wanted. He knew he had to change something or the hard work seemed like it just wasn't worth it.

Now his workshop is expanding quite rapidly and is generating more profits than it ever had before. This has happened because he decided to get organised and now he is reaping the benefits.

His shop was fully booked a few weeks in advance and he was turning over a nice profit. He wanted more though. Christmas was coming up and he would only be open a few days between Christmas and New Year. However, he didn't have any bookings for that week and he wanted them.

Because he now had a streamlined database and a promotions template he was able to set up and send out a promotion in a matter of minutes. He decided to run an oil change promotion because he had been able to see, through his new system, that one of his suppliers was offering a significant discount on oil. He could discount his oil change service without losing any money because of the saving available on the oil from the supplier.

> This information and promotion ability was all inside the same system. Quick. Simple. Effective. It generated the bookings that he wanted. He connected with his clients, he offered them something of value and they accepted his offer. Todd kept his workshop busy at a time when many others were struggling to do the same.

The kind of regular communication customers appreciate most includes service reminders, safety check reminders, or a message to point out their vehicle registration is due soon.

You might also like to let your clients know that some other type of repair or replacement is due, based on previous work or checks.

As you can see by the examples above, communication is a simple and powerful way to assist your business processes. A basic text message reminder can save you from under booking. A simple email promotion can generate more business with minimal effort and no cost.

You can't run an advertisement in any traditional media for free, but with his database and communication system Todd, in the story above, was able to advertise his promotion without it costing him anything more than a half hour of his time.

The ability to communicate with your customers in this way provides you with unlimited opportunities to promote services, maintain relationships and strengthen your business across the board. There has never been an easier way to grow your business than with this new communication, and it is critical to your business success that your auto workshop learns to take full advantage of this new opportunity.
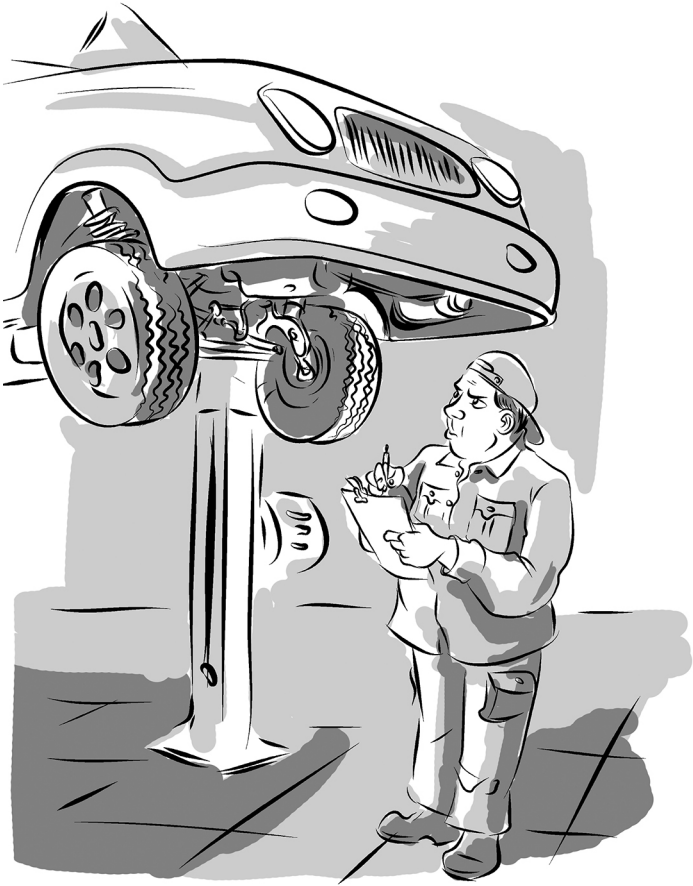
Chapter 4
Stop Leaving Money On The Table

Surprisingly, many of the auto workshop owners that we have met over the years have experienced the problem of not being able to maximise the booking capacity of their shop. This issue of under booking and even over booking is something that must be taken seriously if you want to be among the most successful auto workshop owners in your area.

Your profits will grow when your business is consistently booked to capacity. This might be easier to achieve than you think, and until your auto workshop can book to capacity your profits may never truly be maximised.

Every day that your business is under booked you are losing money. Every day that your business is over booked you risk losing customers. Both of these issues are usually the result of not having an efficient booking system that is designed to show the bookings clearly and highlight what space is available.

When your auto workshop is under booked you have staff that are not doing the core work that generates your profits, yet you must still pay them to be there. When your auto workshop is over booked you have customers

who made a booking and expect the service they have arranged. If you have to re-schedule their bookings, then you have created an inconvenience for them and this can be enough to push them away from your business and straight to another auto workshop. It does sound a little harsh, but it can and does happen.

Your auto workshop will be in a much better position to succeed when your booking system is accurate and reliable, in fact it will be near impossible to grow your business when there are booking errors leaking your profits.

Imagine the problem of booking errors as being like a bucket with a hole in it. The faster you pour the water in, the faster it leaks out. Each day that your bookings are not full is another day your bucket is leaking, and each day that your bookings are too full is also a day that your bucket is leaking. To grow your business profitably, it's important that you know your capacity on a day-to-day basis and that you work towards filling it exactly to the brim.

This means that you adjust your capacity when a staff member will not be at work. If you are short staffed, you cannot take bookings as if you had your full complement of staff. It seems so simple, yet this is where a lot of auto workshop businesses struggle. This is often because the person making the bookings is unaware of the staffing situation. If your staff have access to an easy

and clear booking system you will successfully eliminate this expensive problem.

Todd, who we met in the previous chapter, had once had a lot of trouble with booking errors. Before he implemented his new system he constantly had to deal with double bookings and angry customers. Below is another story about Todd and the evolution of his auto workshop business.

Before Todd had implemented his new integrated information system, he was suffering the consequences of booking errors. His staff were frequently double booking the business to the point that the work was not getting done. Todd spent a lot of his time explaining and apologising to his irritated customers.

While he was explaining the errors to customers, and making new booking arrangements, he was actually getting further behind on his work because he wasn't in the auto workshop taking care of his mechanical responsibilities. The more often it happened the more money his business was losing.

The final straw came with a telling reality check. A customer arrived to drop in her car, as per her booking. Todd was unaware that she had even booked and was left with a very awkward apology to make.

He explained to her that they probably wouldn't get to it that day and convinced her to re-book the service for the next week. She was irritated, but seemed understanding, at least to Todd's face. He noticed, however, that after she walked out of his door she headed straight across the street to his competitor.

Todd knew then that he had lost her business for good. He knew she wouldn't show up for the new booking she had made. He knew then that he had to do something to change his business.

Every day that your business is under booked, is a day that is costing you money; every over booking risks losing you customers.

A booking system that eliminates these issues will improve your business success. It is not difficult to fix the problems associated with under booking and over booking and when you do, your customers will be happy, your staff will be happy and your new found profits will make YOU very happy.

You saw in the story above how Todd was prompted into changing his booking system. He was tired of apologising and he was tired of the mistakes. There was no one to blame. He knew his staff was not at fault because the system he had in place simply didn't work. They could not clearly see what was booked, how many

staff would be in on any given day, and sometimes cancellations were not being noted. It was chaos and it was up to him to take control and fix the problem. He eliminated the stress, he maximised his booking capacity and he experienced business growth. Systems that work are crucial to business improvement, profitability and growth.
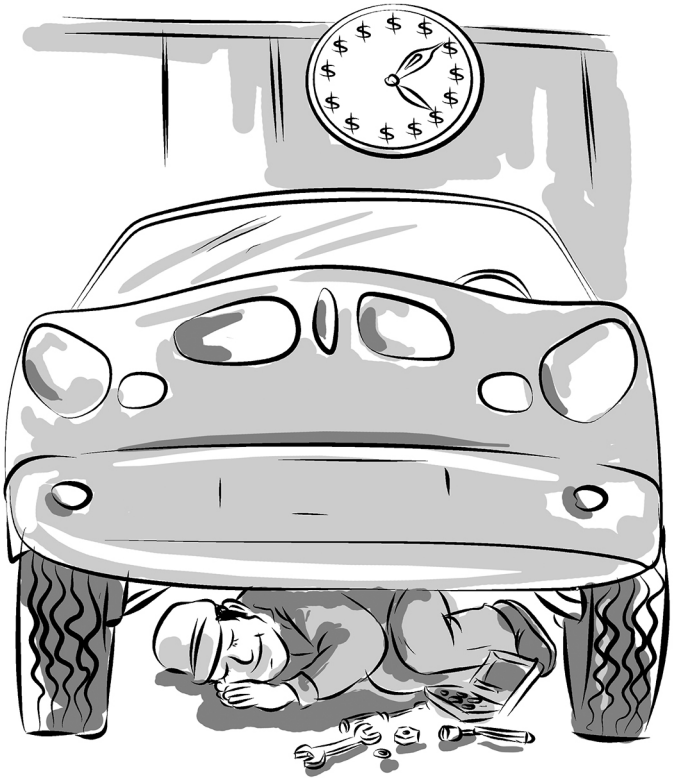
Is Your Mechanic's Billable Time Accurate?

I often hear from auto workshop owners about how difficult it is to ensure their mechanics are charging the time they spend on jobs accurately.

It is crucial to your business success that you know your mechanics are not under charging (or over charging.) To put it in very simple terms: If the number of hours your mechanic works on a job is very close to the number of hours charged for that job then everything is fine.

However, if the number of hours a mechanic has worked on a job is significantly more or less than the number of hours charged, then there is a profit leak in this aspect of your business. The possibility of profit leaks is what makes it so incredibly important that you have a system that allows you to see exactly how much time is spent and on what.

Here is a classic example of a sadly all-too-common occurrence, particularly in well-established auto workshops with loyal customer bases.

Joe has been in the auto workshop business for almost twenty years. He has a loyal customer base, he knows his customers well, and he has always made a good living, however in the last year or so, he hasn't been doing as well as he would like. He couldn't understand why he was now finding money a bit tight, when he wasn't doing anything differently.

Joe didn't realise that while everyone else around him had increased their prices every year, he had not. He was paying more for parts and labour, while his rent had also increased. Below is just one example of how under charging his service was hurting his business.

For the past ten years Joe has been charging out a logbook service at $200 but in that time the services are taking significantly longer due to more complex vehicles and requirements. This results in an incorrect charge because what was once taking Joe an hour is now taking him two hours.

Joe does some quick calculations and realises he is undercharging by about $100 three times a week all year long. In a year this is costing him an estimated $15 000 per year.

When you look at the loss in figures like this it becomes very clear how crucial it is to stop this profit drain.

If you have ever wondered where your profit is going, it might be time to look at what you charge and if it is

accurate. But there is even more you can do to ensure time is charged correctly.

Imagine if you had a system that clocked the hours each mechanic spent on a job. Wouldn't that eliminate this problem altogether? To keep your business on track towards maximum profitability, it is absolutely essential that you are getting the maximum productivity from your mechanics during every single hour that is available.

The problem many workshop owners face is finding a way to do this cost-effectively, without mechanics spending all their time doing paperwork to log which job they're working on and for how long. A clocking system can sort out this issue and provide you with the facts and figures.

There is also the issue with manual systems that there is the possibility of human error (whether it is accidental or intentional), with mechanics forgetting to log on or off jobs and simply guessing at job times when they realise they have forgotten to fill in the paperwork.

It is extremely easy to ensure your mechanics are charging their time correctly if you have the tools to allow you to do so. If you, as the auto workshop owner, can easily see a performance report that highlights your mechanic's time worked compared to the time charged and the gross profit of each job then you know that everything is okay. Without this information how can you be sure you are making money?

Chapter 6
Successful Customer Relationships Are Found In The Details

If you actually look at your whole business as an information highway, you might find that a lot of 'cars' are stalled on the side of the road. It takes information to be able to order parts, make repairs and complete the job. Without this information flowing smoothly the cars will stay on the side of the road longer than they should. If you have the ability to know which cars are on the side of the road and why they are there, then you have the ability to get them moving much faster than if you don't know why they are there in the first place.

It is actually very easy to stay up to date with the status of every single job in your auto workshop. When you have this information at your fingertips you will immediately be able to see the areas where you can improve the efficiency levels in your business.

One of the key traits of the most successful auto workshop owners that we work with, is that they are the ones who channel all of the job information within their auto workshop into one central system so everyone in the business has what they need when they need it. The higher the level of information efficiency operating in your shop, the higher the likelihood that you will be in a position to maximise your profits.

To be profitable in your workshop, each job needs to progress to completion in the appropriate timeframes. When this doesn't occur, it is very important to understand why. If you can understand what is stopping a job from progressing then you have the opportunity to eliminate what caused the delay, and if possible stop it from occurring in the future.

The reasons for job progress delay could be anything, perhaps a part is difficult to find, maybe there has been a delivery error, or perhaps your inventory was incorrect and the part you thought you had was not actually in stock. The more transparency you have in your auto workshop operations, the more opportunities you will have to streamline your business and move towards future growth and success. In a nutshell, if you don't know where your jobs are up to, you don't really know your true financial situation.

Job progression sometimes stalls for no apparent reason. Think about this next story:

Billy had recently taken ownership of an auto workshop and even though he had been in the business for over ten years he had never owned a shop of his own. He was used to a certain amount of chaos in the work place, but taking charge of a new business that was lacking in systems was much more challenging than he thought it would be.

There was no information system, meaning he had no way of easily accessing the information about how each job was progressing. He was reaching the point

where he actually dreaded the phone ringing simply because his shop was chaotic and he struggled to give information to customers. He didn't like sounding incompetent and by the end of each day he was short tempered and very highly stressed.

Each mechanic had their own way of doing things, and the information was more often than not only available by asking them personally about the status of the jobs they were working on. Often the information only existed inside the head of the mechanic doing the work.

Billy estimated that he or his service manager interrupted each mechanic an average of six times per day with job status related questions, and he estimated each interruption would last for an average of ten minutes. He had five mechanics working at any given time. On an average day this meant that each mechanic was losing one hour per day just relaying information. This adds up to five hours of lost labour every single day and more than 30 hours per week!

After about six months of owning the business, Bill started to see a lot of holes in the business processes. He noticed many jobs were being started but not finished. He asked one of his mechanics why one particular job had been waiting for days. His mechanic said that he was still waiting on a part. This was a reasonable reply. However, Billy decided to check where the part was because it was unusual

for such an order to take so long. It didn't take him long to find it. It was sitting on a shelf at the back of the workshop and had been since the vehicle arrived.

This set his mind wondering, and he looked up all of the jobs that were taking a long time to complete. He found two more incomplete jobs that were supposedly waiting on parts. Those parts were also on the shelf.

This breakdown in communication within the auto workshop was blocking the ability of the business to maximise profits. His mechanics didn't know when parts had come in and they hadn't even checked to find out because they were so busy.

In your workshop, at any moment, it's critical that you know the exact status of any job. The most important things to know are:

- The work coming in is logged consistently
- The allocated mechanics are working on their assigned jobs
- The actual work is being done efficiently
- The job is completed and delivered to the client at the time promised.

If you have a large workshop, you probably have a service manager, whose responsibility is to oversee all the jobs. He needs to be able to answer all of the important questions related to any of the jobs at any time. For example:

- Has a mechanic been assigned to the job?
- What stage is the job at?

- • Are there any delays?
- • Has the job been completed?

Depending on the size of your workshop, the time required to keep track of the answers to all of these questions (and more) is unrealistic unless you have a system in place to assist you.

If a client calls you, wanting to know if their vehicle is ready, how long does it take you to find out the answer for sure? Does someone have to run into the workshop, locate the vehicle and ask the mechanics when it will be ready?

What if a client contacts you to ask if they can possibly pick up their vehicle earlier than originally requested? Wouldn't it make your life easier if you could access a system that could show you whether you could move jobs around to accommodate their request?

A system that shows you in real time exactly what the status is of every job in your shop will make your life – or the life of your manager – so much easier. One of the most common issues we see in the auto workshop environment is that often the information about job status is actually being stored inside the head of your mechanic. Unless you are a mind reader, you cannot know where each job is up to. You won't know any information about it until you ask the mechanic who is working on the job.

An information system within your auto workshop is critical to your success. An information highway that keeps everything running smoothly from end to end is the key to becoming a successful and profitable business owner.

Chapter 7
What Is The Latest Pricing?

Another area where we constantly find auto workshop owners leaking profits is within the sales price for parts, as some clients have access to discounted pricing, while others will pay the standard retail rates.

Retail clients will generally be charged standard recommended retail pricing, while trade clients will often be entitled for discounted pricing on some parts and services. For example, those trade clients who have a fleet of vehicles will be charged differently to the retail client who has one car.

This can be an area where expensive errors are made within the auto workshop environment. The breakdown of accuracy in customer pricing often occurs when customer information is not stored in one central system, but rather, it is in scattered files, or, much like the information regarding the status of jobs in the workshop, which was discussed in the previous chapter, the important information may be stored securely inside the head of various employees.

This means that not every staff member has access to the same information, and this break in the information chain is where pricing errors can happen. Often, in a busy auto workshop, they go unnoticed.

Below is an example of how important this information is, and how, by not having a system that manages pricing information, the revenue of the business can be compromised and profit maximisation becomes impossible.

Ben is an auto workshop owner. He has been in business a long time and all of the information about his customers is stored in filing cabinets. He has one cabinet for retail customers, and another filing cabinet to store the information about his trade clients. Some of the files are very up to date, while others lack even the basic information regarding trade client discount rates and which parts those discounts apply to.

Jason had been working for Ben for more than a year, and he was still struggling to understand the discounts and how they were to be applied to the different trade clients. Mark was a trade client who always got a 25% discount on brake pads. Jason had served Mark a couple of times and because he was familiar with his account, he was confident when selling him parts.

On this particular visit, Mark didn't buy brake pads; instead, he bought oil filters, oil, and air filters, which he did three times a year. Jason, because he was familiar with this customer, applied the 25% discount as he believed he was supposed to do. What Jason didn't know – there was no way he could know – was that Mark was not entitled to 25% discount on anything except brake pads. He was actually expected to pay standard retail rates on these parts.

A lack of accurate and easily accessible information regarding correct sale pricing can compromise the profits of your workshop. The mistake is an honest one where the staff member simply didn't have access to the correct pricing information and the result was a loss in profit.

A system that provides correct information regarding part sales prices at the push of a button is one of the most crucial components that will enable you to run a successful and profitable business.

Accurate and immediate access to pricing information allows staff members to feel confident and secure when serving customers because they know they have the correct information and, as a business owner, it provides you with priceless peace of mind.

When you know that your profits are not being compromised, and that your customers are not being short-changed by basic errors arising from the lack of information access, then you know you are on track for profit maximisation.

A streamlined system that automatically calculates correct customer pricing can provide your auto workshop with an invaluable time and money saving tool that will pay for itself many times over.

Chapter 8
Who Should Be Paid And When?

A very common issue for many of the auto workshop owners we talk to revolves around cash flow and how difficult it can be to maintain it within the business. It is stressful for business owners and managers, and more often than not they express to us high levels of confusion and worry about cash flow.

Your cash flow is an easy problem to solve and you may have more money available in your business than you realise. Many auto workshop businesses explain to us that they pay their outstanding invoices either immediately or, worse still, haphazardly. This is often the cause of a cash flow shortage.

A simple system and a little organisation will free up your cash flow, eliminate any late payment penalties and give you peace of mind.

There is a way to pay your invoices without limiting your cash flow. When the invoices pile up you may feel that, once again, you are trying to fill that leaky bucket we mentioned earlier. You are busy, you are working hard, your staff are working hard, and yet there is a constant cash shortage. Why is this happening? Why does the bucket continue leaking?

The story below shows just how easy this problem can be for you to solve in your auto workshop

Jim had run his shop for five years, and run it very well with what he had. His workshop was busy, he worked hard, paid his accounts and his customers were reliable with their payments.

He was, however, always struggling with cash flow. Because Jim was always busy, he liked to pay each creditor as the account came in. He felt that this was the best way to make sure he didn't forget to pay someone, plus it seemed the 'noble' thing to do. At a glance this seems like a sensible approach. However, for Jim, paying his accounts in this way was actually causing him trouble. Making these immediate payments was the source of his cash flow problem.

With an automated system, Jim was able to pay accounts on time and still have a healthy cash flow. He achieved this with a few phone calls to arrange new payment dates with creditors and an automated payment system that kept everything up to date. The only difference now was that his payments were made at times when he had more money.

Not only did he now have cash flow, he had more time. He was no longer writing cheques and wading through paperwork, amid the constant worry that he had misplaced an invoice or forgotten to pay someone.

Jim also had a healthier mindset and a happier outlook. His stress about money washed away, all of Jim's payments were made like clockwork. It took Jim just a few hours to set up his new payment system and he hasn't looked back since.

Jim didn't just take care of his creditors with an automated system, he also organised his debtors. With one glance he could see who owed him money, how much they owed, when the payments were due, which payments were overdue, and by how long.

His system also sent out late payment notices automatically and this simple change in his business actually lifted a heavy burden. Jim's auto workshop is well known and he knows many of his customers very well. He had always struggled to chase late payments because most of the people who owed him money were also his friends.

This made the conversations awkward. He was a mechanic, not a debt collector, and he didn't like talking to his friends about money. With his new system, things are different. Now when his clients receive a reminder, he is able to joke with them about it. "It's just my new system mate – that stuff goes out automatically, I feel like I have another wife, it's so organised".

He was able to have a laugh, but privately he knew they would remember to pay him.

A system that takes away burdens is invaluable and Jim knows that, by chasing his money for him, his system is raking in money owed him that he might not otherwise have been able to get.

Over the years, many shop owners have told me, *"We know it's important to have all the information at hand and all of the demands for payment totally under our control, but it just doesn't seem to be a top priority."*

If you see yourself mainly as the technical expert, rather than the accountant in your business, you probably feel the same way. On a typically busy day, the main thing you want to be doing is getting on with your core business – fixing cars.

Keeping track of the invoices is not usually the most exciting part of the workshop business. Yet it's crucial that invoices are managed and under control, so you don't lose profitability by being subject to late fees or other penalties that can impact your business financially.

This may seem obvious, but it's easy to lose sight of one of the core reasons you are in business – to make money. Your suppliers are also in the business to make money as well. Paying your invoices on time consistently will certainly improve your reputation with them.

Imagine being free of ever having to worry about an invoicing or accounts payable issue.

It is very common for auto workshop business owners to be so busy that they simply lose track of time when it comes to paperwork. It is easy for invoices to become overdue, and this is why many auto workshop owners feel that the best management of creditors is to pay them immediately, or outsource this work at an exorbitant fee. However, this is a reactive approach to your financial responsibilities. What Jim did in the story above, was to take a proactive approach and this made his life so much easier and assisted his business success.

By implementing an integrated system, which streamlines your business, you allow yourself the peace of mind that comes with knowing that everyone has been paid, and you still have cash in hand. You don't have to struggle the way you are. There is a proactive solution waiting for you.

Stop The Tax & GST Nightmares

When the topic turns to GST and BAS reporting, I can't begin to describe the level of anguish I've seen from some auto workshop owners, who see it as a harrowing event that puts pressure on their time, emotions and on the business in general.

The overall success of your business depends on your ability to keep your tax obligations under control. We hear time and time again that it is extremely difficult for auto workshop owners and managers to get the required information together in one place.

Does this common scenario feel familiar?

You haven't done your books at the time they should have been completed. So, at the end of the quarter, you're not up-to-date with the data entry details of your business.

You don't have an efficient filing system, so many of your records are difficult to find and are not easily accessible. What you do have could be best described as a 'disorganised mess', which you then hand over to your accountant, who has to spend days sorting through the details and figuring out what information needs to be entered into your accounting system.

The scary ending to this scenario, as you probably can imagine, is when your accountant presents you with an invoice for thousands of dollars for their time.

You may have recent memories of those late evenings, just before the deadline, working late in your office with a stack of receipts and bank statements in front of you. Perhaps you have tried hard not to remember!

> **Do you worry whether you've forgotten anything?**
>
> **Are you absolutely sure that all of the figures are accurate?**
>
> **Have you completed all of the requirements for full compliance?**
>
> **Do you tell yourself that next time you'll do it differently and swear that you will keep better records?**
>
> **Do you promise yourself to never again wait until the last minute and start the task just a day before the statements are due?**
>
> **And do you suspect that, in all probability, it will be exactly the same next time?**
>
> **Wouldn't you rather put your energy into work that you would prefer to do?**

As we have seen earlier, it all comes down to the systems and procedures within your business, and ensuring they are designed to maximise your time and profits. If you have a system that has been designed correctly for your business and you run it efficiently, then generating your GST and BAS at the end of the quarter can be a very easy task.

The story below illustrates what the right system can do for you and for your business:

Nick was a savvy mechanic who knew perfectly well that his skills lay in fixing cars, not managing GST and BAS for his business. He understood that when he became a shop owner, he would need this area to take care of itself. When he took ownership of his auto workshop he made the decision to use a system that managed this for him, right from day one.

This has saved him time, money and stress. He doesn't understand accounting, but knows that he doesn't need to. He has the information required by the tax department available at the push of a button.

The system constantly works behind the scenes and extracts the relevant information. It then puts that information aside. Nick can see it any time he wants to and – as it is real time data – it is always up to date. As a result, the end of the financial year has always been pain-free for Nick.

In a few simple steps, content is gathered into a report for handing to his accountant. The information is correct, easy to access and saves both time and money.

You can take the stress out of GST and BAS reporting by using the same smart system as Nick does. A system that is fully integrated with the day-to-day running of your auto workshop gathers the information into one place and stores it until you need it.

Chapter 10
Generic vs Auto Industry Specific Systems

Many workshop owners who contact us have tried generic 'one size fits all' business software packages in an attempt to manage the operational details of their business.

The trouble with generic software packages is that most workshop owners believe they are the only systems available to help them manage their business. When we have a conversation with the owners about what Workshop Software can do for their business, they suddenly realise what they are missing out on – an industry-specific system capable of streamlining and transforming daily operations.

I have seen time and time again that workshop owners choose accounting packages or inferior automotive packages, which are based on their accountant's recommendation. Thankfully, there is now a solution that will keep the accountants happy too!

Workshop Software integrates directly with Xero account software. Xero is one of the best accounting systems for small businesses in Australia and almost all accountants love it.

Having been the CEO of Autosoft Pty Ltd for over 20 years, I saw a need in the market for quality software at a reasonable price that could be run by virtually anyone and had to integrate with the best accounting system around. That's how Workshop Software came about.

We wanted to create a simple, yet powerful operations system that allowed business owners to run the operations, then leave the worry of the accounting to the admin staff or their accountant.

This gives them the best of both worlds. The operations are handled by the operations people, and the accounts by the accounts experts. Also, Workshop Software can be used by the smallest mechanical workshop – even a 1-man operation – right up to a large, sophisticated business.

As it needed to be available anywhere at any time, we set about designing a cutting edge system that would rival the best "Software as a Service" applications, in terms of its look, feel and technical operation. I don't want to get too technical with you, but Workshop Software uses the very latest software development tools, and runs on the leading secure hardware infrastructure, so your data is not only safe, it's also FAST.

Now this is not a book designed to sell you Workshop Software, it's about how you can become more profitable. But I believe giving you an insight into

why Workshop Software was created and some of its functions, may be valuable to some readers.

As you can see, even industry-based systems are not the complete answer: you need to get the best system to streamline your operation.

We also hear similar stories of people who persist with accounting packages, until they become so frustrated by trying to find the information they need, they come and talk with Workshop Software.

Sometimes we hear stories of how a workshop owner's accountant "makes" them use MYOB. SERIOUSLY? It's YOUR business – you do what's best for YOU, not your accountant. The ironic thing is that almost all accountants who take the time to look at Workshop Software develop a very positive view of it. They are impressed and suggest to their client that it is a good thing for their business, which will be fine at getting the accounting data out of the system when required.

The problem with generic solutions is that they are not designed for the specialised tasks associated with an automotive and mechanical business. For example, they can't manage vehicle history and jobs effectively, and they are unable to manage and monitor mechanics' time or productivity.

The same is true of generic accounting packages. There are specific processes in a mechanical workshop business that cannot run properly on a system, which is designed by an accountant, rather than someone who is an expert in the automotive industry.

> ! **An industry-specific package is custom designed to run your operations seamlessly.**

Another vitally important aspect of an organisation, which is devoted to specialising in Automotive Software, rather than dealing with all sorts of industries, is the level of service they can provide. Here at Workshop Software, the ONLY businesses we deal with are Automotive, so we know what you guys do in the day-to-day running of your business. We know the challenges, the frustrations and, just as importantly, the solutions. When you phone your generic accounting package for support, what do they know about workshops?

The Workshop Software solution is specifically designed for the automotive industry to address and solve all of the major challenges mentioned in previous chapters that are faced by business owners all over Australia.

Here are some additional modules that can be included in the Workshop Software to streamline your business:

- Easy storage and retrieval of client and vehicle information
- Simple and effective job management
- Mechanical labour management and tracking
- Spare parts inventory and pricing system
- Time and money-saving strategies for a more efficient operation
- Rapid, efficient and professional ways of communicating with clients
- Easy system for invoicing and payments methods
- Safe and secure methods for organising and storing vital financial records
- Effortless integration with great account software]

Not only does Workshop Software provide solutions for the problems and the challenges that you are facing in your workshop, it will dramatically improve productivity, performance and the profits of your business.

Reporting is a key facet of any business and knowing your numbers is paramount. Workshop Software has many key reports to give you the information you require, at the time you need it. Many business owners are amazed at how they lived for so long without the key stats and information that they now take for granted, available at the press of a button from Workshop Software.

It is essentially a simple, easy-to-read record of critical information that can be viewed quickly. You can

see how your business is tracking and view the history, either generally or in very specific areas.

As you can see, Workshop Software is completely dedicated to growing your business efficiently and profitably.

Your Questions Answered

At Workshop Software, we pride ourselves on having the highest level of service in the industry. We see you as a business partner, meaning your success is our success. We are also committed to a high level of professionalism, respect and honesty in all of our dealings with our clients.

Here are some of the common questions that we frequently hear:

Why do I need this type of system?

From an administration and management point of view, the question really is whether you have the right tools to run your business. An interesting analogy, which I often use, is the kind of choice that mechanics, for example, will make. They will go out and buy the very best spanner and the best hoist. They'll spend big money on the finest quality oil, but when it comes to running their business, as opposed to doing the work of the business, they might choose to settle for a second-best solution, or worse still, not much of a solution at all.

To buy the cheapest business system is almost never a good option. It might not be as appealing as a spanner, air gun or a hoist, but it produces a quality result and

saves time. And an efficient, time-saving system naturally improves profitability.

Is it a complete system that handles all areas of my business?

Yes, Workshop Software is a complete package, specifically designed for automotive workshops. It includes an easy to use workshop management system, designed for you to handle all of the day-to-day operations with ease.

To make it as simple as possible to use, Workshop Software provides you with a pre-configured system that is already set-up with some example information, so that you can get up and running as quickly as possible. For instance, we set-up consumables, miscellaneous stock and sublet repairs, so you can start invoicing straight away.

There are user settings so that you can have one or more people using the system and give them all different access rights. For example, the owner will have access to everything, while the operations staff may not get access to some, or all, of the reports.

Would I use all the features of the system?

The great thing about the simplicity of Workshop Software is that you can start with the areas that are most important to you, and then grow into some of the more sophisticated parts. For example, you might start with workshop management as your main aim, and then begin

working on promotion and customer communication campaigns, once you have the workshop side running smoothly.

Does it mean a lot of work?

Because Workshop Software is an online system, it's real easy to start. You can get going virtually immediately and setting up the basic information is so simple.

We provide you with a simple training series that will get you going in no time. There are a number of simple videos, most are less than 5 minutes in length, which will help you to get the most from Workshop Software straight away.

Will I have to buy a lot of extra hardware?

NO! Workshop Software is an online software system, so all you need is access to the internet. You can run it on an iPad, tablet and even your phone. It's especially useful for mobile workshops, but it's also great for service advisors who walk around with a tablet or iPad. They can talk directly with clients at their vehicle, while looking up and creating information as they go.

Can I afford to buy this system?

The beauty of Workshop Software is that it is so inexpensive. Our aim was to create a great system that was affordable for all. There is a low monthly investment,

which you should be able to return many times over through the efficiencies and professionalism that you'll get by using Workshop Software in your business.

What sort of service and backup can I expect?

Workshop Software is so simple to use and, because it's online, you shouldn't need much help at all. However, we're here if you do!

You can contact the support team and we'll sort out any questions you may have.

What do others say about the system?

Implementing a new business system of any kind can be a daunting step in the growth of your shop. We appreciate fully that it is not a decision to be taken lightly. Above all, we would recommend that you seek other people's opinions and take time and care to ensure you're making an informed decision.

Here are some comments from business owners and managers like you, who are now excited to have Workshop Software implemented in their business. They have gone through the same processes and faced decisions that you're probably considering right now. It might be useful for you to know that other shop owners like you have had very positive experiences, which exceeded their original expectations.

"Just a quick note to let you and the team know how happy and satisfied Mick and I are with Workshop Software. It's perfect for our Transmission/Mechanical business. Makes office duties so simple, and saves a lot of time on record keeping, which leaves me more time to get our new business marketed and running efficiently. Workshop Software can be used with such ease, even my 9-year-old son begs to record parts and invoice our customers. Since starting to use Workshop Software, I've been totally hooked! Thanks so much guys :)."

Tina, Great Lakes Transmissions

"I researched lots of software programs for my new business but they all seemed the same, with cluttered screens and complicated operating procedures. I was instantly attracted to Workshop Software's clean appearance, ease of use and flexibility. The guys have been very helpful and tolerant of my stupid questions."

Dave, Autocentre Gold Coast

"Really happy with Workshop Software, it is simple and easy to use. Also it's web-based, so I can access it anywhere to do an invoice, as I am mobile Mechanic."

Michael, SPM Automotive

The Background of Workshop Software

Workshop Software is a team of committed and successful professionals who strive for improvements in all areas of their self and the Workshop Software business. The team is dedicated to the Workshop Software Team values and they conduct themselves accordingly.

Our clients are committed to the continuous improvement of their own businesses, which can be enhanced by using Workshop Software products. We like to think of our clients as business partners who, through their own growth, also help Workshop Software to grow – it's a win/win situation.

Workshop Software is committed to developing products using the very latest technology, improving our client's businesses by providing them with state-of-the-art business systems, and helping them perform to the best of their abilities. We know from experience that our products are great value for money and add even greater value to the businesses of our clients.

When John opened his store, he purchased some software to run his business. With little ongoing support from the developer and a desire to improve the software, John learned enough computer programming skills to

massage the system into a workable package for his business.

It was unusual at that time to see a store as small as John's running a computer. This quickly created hype around what he was doing and colleagues eventually started asking to use the software too. Over time, this interest from colleagues turned it into a full-time occupation. John sold his parts business and officially started Workshop Software.

By the mid-80's, John decided on a sea change for his family. He planned to take a year off, travel around Australia and eventually find a place to live. He wanted to ensure that his band of loyal Workshop Software clients were cared for, but did not want the responsibility while he was away. John contacted a good friend, Ron Mitchell, and arrangements were made for Ron to take over.

Ron set up a home office in Bilgola, right alongside the pool table in the back room of his house. Over the next few years, staff came and went, many leaving an indelible mark on the company. Eventually, Ron's son James came on board and they began to forge a future for Autosoft.

The vision at the time was to get a dealership package operating. Firstly, it started with an updated parts & workshop program. They moved into new premises in Apollo Street in Warriewood. An industrial unit was taken, which was turned into a professional looking office. They would remain at this location for over 17 years.

Meanwhile, Autosoft was evolving from a DOS-based system to a Windows-based system, long before many of its competitors. A dealership system was created along with specialised systems for service stations, dismantlers, engine reconditioners and parts outlets.

Over this period, working relationships were developed with a myriad of clients in all sectors of the automotive industry.

These relationships were built on a foundation of providing great software, professional and personalised support, and an attitude of always going that extra step for clients. James and Ron knew most of the clients personally and would offer face-to-face, hands on training and support, which saw them travel all over the country.

In December 2006, Ron retired and James took on the company in its entirety. This was the impetus for obtaining the services of a Business Coach in Craig Brewster, who helped with its transition from a small family business into a sophisticated, systemised, professional organisation, with a vision of developing "the best business software in the world".

In the period from 2006 to 2009, the company grew exponentially and in October 2009 moved to a brand new million dollar head office facility on Daydream Street in Warriewood.

In 2013, Workshop Software was created from James seeing a need for great, simple, value for money software that could run even the smallest workshop. I

also wanted to create a Software as a Service (SaaS) model application, which could be used anywhere anytime. With Autosoft being a more sophisticated, and therefore expensive option, it did not suit every business, and it pained me to see businesses buy cheap software that did not run their business correctly.

So I wanted to create a system that was not only inexpensive, but handled all the day-to-day running of a Workshop. I'm very pleased with the outcome and it can now boast solutions for virtually any Automotive Business.

I also see international expansion as a future growth driver and have written Workshop Software with full international capabilities. I'm excited by what the future holds.

HOW TO GET PROFITABLE FAST!

James Mitchell, *Australia's #1 Business Growth Expert* for the Automotive Industry, has been in the enviable position of working directly with hundreds of ambitious auto shop owners from all over Australia. James, for the first time, unravels the mysteries involved in how to truly become a successful and profit-focused auto shop business owner.

As the CEO of Workshop Software, Australia's most popular state-of-the-art operations system for growth-oriented shop owners, James shares real-world scenarios that put you in the shoes of not only workshop owners (you), but also your most valuable asset, your customers. This honest and authentic book delves into real challenges and solutions that virtually every auto shop owner experiences as they shift toward growing their business by maximizing profits as well as creating long-lasting customer relationships.

Get ready to discover:

- How you can get control of the chaos in your business and transform it into a "dream business" through automation and efficiency

- How to elevate yourself from "chief mechanic" to CEO of your business without giving up the work you love the most from your business

- How to systematize your business so that your staff feel valued and come to work every day ready to do their best

- How to finally "plug up the holes" in your shop that continue to create profit leaks on a daily basis

**For your Free Consultation to see if
Workshop Software is right for your business, visit us at:
www.WorkshopSoftware.com.au**