

KIRMAC COLLISION SERVICES AUBURN WASHINGTON LOCATION LEADS THE WAY

The plaque hanging on the wall behind the desk of Dennis Daily, General Manager of the Kirmac Collision Services in Auburn, WA, says it all; "Successful people simply form the habit of doing things unsuccessful people don't like to do". After 5 years in operation, there can be no doubt that the Kirmac Auburn collision repair shop has, from humble beginnings, grown into a huge success. Kirmac's public recognition in the community includes the Better Business Bureau's award for customer service – made all the more commendable due to the fact that this is the first time that a body shop has ever been awarded that accolade in Washington or Oregon.



Bodyman Gary Santos beside a chainless anchoring system

Possibly the most significant affirmation of Kirmac's success, however, is the number of DRP's the shop has earned over the past five years. Starting with just two DRP's in 1999, the Kirmac Auburn facility now boasts five times that number. "Business is very good", beams Dennis, "but it has not been easy". It takes a consistent record of performance based results to build the trust required to establish a really successful DRP relationship with the best insurers. With one glance around the shop it's easy to see why these strategic relationships have been established. The whole operation is clean and organized and you can tell a "system" approach is being applied in both the front and back-end of the business. With twelve Wedge Clamp equipped stalls (including built-in Herkules lifts), three Pivot Measuring Systems and Eze Tie-Down System, the shop is equipped for

any repair eventuality. While Kirmac also operates with a full frame repair rack and laser measuring system, the fact that each body technician has two Wedge Clamp stalls to work with means that there's no wasted time waiting for the frame rack to be freed up for the 80% of the repairs that can be handled immediately by the body technician already assigned to the repair.

"Adapt or you're gone..."

"Our success is based on a number of factors," says Dennis as we stroll through the immaculate shop. "The equipment we use has certainly contributed to Kirmac's success, but our management system and the people we select to join our team make the biggest difference. This is a very competitive industry we're in. You've got to manage your staff as a coach does a football team – you've got to know your players strengths and weaknesses, and provide them with the best training and equipment you can get to back them up." As he talks we're passed by a bodyman pushing a car into the paint section. Within a few paces he is aided by two of his colleagues. "You see?" grins Dennis with obvious satisfaction, "Teamwork!"

As we observe a bodyman assembling an anchoring system with apparent ease, Dennis remarks "The beauty of the Wedge Clamp is that you don't have to move the car once it's in the repair bay. You can process the entire vehicle from start to finish – it's a one-man assembly line. This saves a lot of space and time. Another great feature that I personally appreciate is that once you get one of these systems, you hardly ever have to worry about maintenance. In the five years we've had our systems, I think we needed a service guy to come in once. When we first got the Wedge Clamps the bodymen were a bit sceptical, as they were used to working on racks. It didn't take very long, however, for them to recognize the benefits and realize they can perform a great repair as well as make

more money using this approach."

"Look behind you," Dennis gestures with his characteristic enthusiasm toward a large window that looks directly onto the shop floor from the reception area. "Occasionally I'll spot a prospective customer looking through the window watching the activity on the shop floor. All it usually takes to gain their confidence and have them select our shop for the repairs is a personal tour to show them how Kirmac's repair process works. By making a point of educating our customers – we win their trust first, complete an outstanding repair and then they come back and/or refer us in the future". "It's a very satisfying business when you approach it that way!"

Making the bodyman's life easier

Gary Santos, bodyman at the Auburn Kirmac Collision, has worked on the Wedge Clamp System for only 2 months, yet is already sold on the system.

"I used to work on the Korek system, but I find now that the Wedge Clamp is so much easier. Because all the parts are made of aluminium, it's far lighter. In the previous shop I worked in, there was also a lot of waiting around for the frame rack to be free. Here I have my own frame repair equipment for the majority of the jobs I'm assigned to. It's a neat little unit, yet very capable.

When I asked Gary whether he found



Kirmac Collision's Auburn, WA, facility.

the Wedge Clamp training manuals and videos useful, he replied with a laugh, "The manuals are right there on the shelf... I never needed to use them once though. It's incredibly easy to figure out!"

To contact Wedge Clamp Systems call 1-800-615-9949 or visit www.wedgeclamp.com