

AkzoNobel Products, Processes Help Pride Auto Body Group Grow, Sustain Business



by Autobody News Staff

In 1982, childhood friends **Randy Stabler** and **Robert Turchan** founded *Pride Auto Body* after graduating college and deciding to go into business together doing something they loved: working on cars.

They opened a two-man operation and worked hard until they were able to grow into a larger facility with other employees. They expanded their footprint every few years to eventually include seven California locations that employ 165 collision repair professionals who repair an average of 1,200 vehicles monthly. Most of their shops are I-CAR Gold-certified and each shop has acquired several OEM certifications. The specific manufacturers vary by location.

"We cater to discerning customers who want their vehicle fixed at a shop that is certified to perform correct repairs," said **Steve Morris**, Director of Operations for the Pride Auto Body Group.

"It's impossible to grow a business to this extent without people and processes in place to help sustain it, and AkzoNobel has been right there. They're well-versed in the daily aspects of a collision repair business, and they've been tremendously helpful in developing our processes and people. AkzoNobel isn't just a paint company; they're more interested in helping us implement our growth strategy [and] strengthening our team's leadership skills."

Pride Auto Body's relationship with AkzoNobel originated with paint, and the shop's employees now spray with Sikkens waterborne system. Paint shop manager **Paco Arias** relies on Sikkens for its ease of use and superior color-matching qualities.

"AkzoNobel has always looked to simplify systems for their customers, and their Sikkens line is very easy to mix due to its simple two-to-one ratios," Arias said. "The waterborne basecoat is easier to spray than solvent, and the primers' dry time is amazing. The system is more standardized, allowing us to deliver a high-quality product in less time. It's simpler for anyone to use and has yielded huge improvements in throughput."



Pride Auto Body has expanded from one shop to seven locations since it was founded in 1982.

When AkzoNobel introduced Automatchic for digital color formula retrieval, *Pride Auto Body* was among the first shops to invest in the time-saving technology.

"We saw the benefits right away," Arias shared. "You take a photo and it provides options immediately. The system is very efficient and accurate, plus it's super easy. Our paint technicians see it as a huge time-saving benefit."

"AkzoNobel is great. They provide anything we need, when we need it, and it's invaluable to have that level of support. Our AkzoNobel service consultant is basically family, and we work together to develop our goals and processes. I just can't imagine doing everything we do without AkzoNobel's support."

As a long-time Sikkens user, *Pride Auto Body* also enjoys access to the Acoat Selected program. The National Performance Group consists of a dozen shops across the country that get together several times annually to discuss their challenges and potential solutions.

Morris noted, "The Acoat program is a great way to network and get to see a bunch of different perspectives. As the moderator, AkzoNobel offers timely topics and potential solutions. Participating in the National Performance Group has been extremely valuable."

Additionally, *Pride Auto Body* participates in the Process Center Environment (PCE) Users Group, which is focused on best practices pertaining to lean implementation.

According to Morris, "We helped AkzoNobel design the PCE concept, but realizing the importance of growing people, the recent focus has become a people-centered

environment. AkzoNobel has supported us by providing coaches and mentors. They understand the value of developing a positive environment where people can grow. This past year has been really rewarding, and AkzoNobel's support has been great throughout this exciting venture."

Morris and Arias agree that they've had nothing but good experiences collaborating with AkzoNobel. *Pride Auto Body* often tests new products and provides feedback.

Arias noted, "They take what we say into consideration and make adjustments before putting the new products on the market."

Morris added, "You have to respect a company that listens to their customers."

Pride Auto Body is also environmentally conscious. In addition to spraying with waterborne paints, all locations have converted to LED lighting and participate in a waste-reduction program.

"Taking care of the planet is something we all need to do, and there is a lot of social awareness in our demographic about how important that is," Morris said.

In addition to their focus on OEM certifications, proper repairs and lean processes, Morris feels that one thing that differentiates *Pride Auto Body* from other shops in the area is its focus on its people.

"This is a people-centered environment. We spend a lot of time and energy investing in our team's skills and leadership abilities," Morris said. "Most of our employees have been here for a long time and grown through the ranks, and our goal is to keep them engaged and excited to be at work."

Pride Auto Body Group

Location: Van Nuys, CA
(888) 300-4441
www.prideautobody.com

Company At A Glance...

Type: MSO
Facility Employees: 165
In Business Since: 1982
Number of Locations: Seven
DRP Programs: Three
Combined Production Space: 70,000 square feet



Pride Auto Body relies on Sikkens from AkzoNobel for its ease of use and superior color-matching qualities.



Participating in AkzoNobel's Process Centered Environment Users Group has allowed *Pride Auto Body* to implement lean processes to improve productivity in its shops.

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