

# Campbell Ford Collision Shop Partners with AkzoNobel Coatings to Bring Shop to Life

**AkzoNobel**

by Autobody News Staff

When **Marvin Dawson** first took on the role of fixed operations director at Campbell Ford in Niles, MI, three years ago, he knew that getting the collision shop on its feet was going to take some work. He was excited, though, to be moving into a second-generation family-owned dealership.

The majority of Dawson's career has taken place in family-owned operations, but after his previous workplace was sold to a large company, Dawson got a taste of a corporate-run business.

"The people that put the blood, sweat and tears into the business were just not appreciated anymore," said Dawson. "They're a number on a payroll list. That's not me. That's not who I am. So I was glad to have the opportunity to come up and work with **Doug Campbell**."

With no trained estimator at *Campbell Ford Collision Shop*, and only one painter and one body man, Dawson knew he had a massive challenge cut out for him. But he also knew the ownership was all in.

"You could see that that they wanted to make things happen," said Dawson. "They wanted to make it work, and they'd put their money in those directions. So I knew if I put the effort in to turn the culture around and put the business back together, we'd have something."

Soon after arriving, Dawson made the decision to partner with AkzoNobel Coatings, after a trusted vendor recommended the company. He quickly found the AkzoNobel team was as committed as he was to making the shop a success.

"So many people have told me stories about the collision industry where, you know, they're courted by a company, then once they sign the contract, it's just crickets," said Dawson. "But with AkzoNobel, the relationship flourished more after I signed the deal than before I signed. They review KPIs for me religiously and look for ways for me to improve my business. I've not had that in 30-some years in



**Campbell Ford's Collision Shop has built a solid customer base with support from AkzoNobel Coatings.**

the business."

In fact, Dawson found AkzoNobel embodied the kind of culture he was striving to build at Campbell Ford.

"They're constantly looking at ways to help me improve. **Ryan Kerr** is my local rep. I think he lives about three hours away from me, and if I had a problem, he'd be here. I feel like I've created a relationship with them that's almost like a family feel where I know they're watching out for me."

The AkzoNobel products themselves are just as easy to work with, according to Dawson, who went through AkzoNobel's training program when Campbell Ford made the switch to their products.

"I've not seen a better color match in the industry," he said. "The ease of application is incredible—the product is forgiving and easy to repair on the fly. The gloss and the shine of the clear products is showstopping."

While transitioning to a new product can be difficult, Dawson rated AkzoNobel's training as second-to-none, and said his employees are thrilled with the results that they get when working with the products.

"They're prideful on it. We like the product that we put out there. They're very happy with the amount of time it takes to color match, to blend, to clear. It is a time-saving product."

Three years since Dawson's arrival, things have changed significantly at Campbell Ford,

even though the area continues to be a crowded collision repair market.

"I now have five body guys, a painter, a prepper and two estimators," he said. "I have a fully certified team of collision repair professionals, and we're doing very, very well actually."

Dawson credits the turnaround to a shift in culture at the shop.

"What I think COVID has done is it made us realize that people just didn't want to go back to work for a paycheck. They wanted to go back to work in a place where they felt truly appreciated, truly recognized, and where things are done right—or they weren't going back."

Going forward, Dawson sees growth in business happening organically, from the word-of-mouth recommendations that result when you take care of customers, rather than "breaking his neck" looking for direct repairs.

The company has a strong relationship with local Enterprise car rental branches, and owner Doug Campbell has taken the step of building the first EV charging station in Niles.

It's clear that, at Campbell Ford, service is the key to growth.

"We're supporting the EV industry and our local community here," said Dawson. "My service manager and I sit on the board for three different high schools' CTE programs. To us, everything's about our brand and it's about community. We're a very proud store."

## Campbell Ford

Niles, MI

269-684-8300

[www.campbellfordniles.com](http://www.campbellfordniles.com)

## Company At A Glance...

**Type:** Collision Repair

**Facility Employees:** 10

**In Business Since:** 1977

**Number of Locations:** One

**Production Space:**

10,000 square feet



**Campbell Ford's certified team of collision repair professionals are thrilled with the results they get with AkzoNobel Coatings.**



**Fixed Operations Director Marvin Dawson hopes to grow Campbell Ford's business in Niles, MI, by providing excellent customer service.**

## AkzoNobel Coatings

800-618-1010

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