

CCC's Repair Cost Predictor 'Gets the Ball Rolling' on Estimates While Freeing Up Staff's Valuable Time



by Autobody News Staff

AC Automotive Inc. was founded in West Hartford, CT, in 1985 by **Aldo Carducci Sr.** as a small Mobil gas station and three-bay mechanical repair shop.

As Aldo Sr.'s two sons, **Guy** and **Aldo Jr.**, grew up and became more involved in the business, they added a 24-hour towing service, which brought in a lot of collision-damaged vehicles. The family started to perform some of that body work themselves.

Eventually, the shop needed to replace its gas tanks per state regulations, at which point the family decided to get out of the gas business altogether and focus on mechanical and body repair.

"That's when we put a big addition on our building," Aldo Jr. said. "We added another 6,000 square feet to offer more body repairs. As time continued, we had so much success, we decided to get out of towing completely and focus our attention on collision."

Today, Guy and Aldo Jr. own AC Automotive, and no longer offer towing or mechanical repairs unless it's tied to the collision repair. In 2021, they opened a second location in New Britain.

The I-CAR Gold and ASE-certified shops hold certifications from Nissan, Infiniti, Hyundai, Kia, Alfa Romeo, Subaru, FCA and Mazda, offering full body repair and refinishing, paintless dent removal, headlamp renewal and windshield replacement. Between both locations, AC Automotive repairs about 200 vehicles per month.

Aldo Jr. said the business has used CCC Intelligent Solutions' estimating platform, CCC ONE, "since the beginning of time," and has since added more of CCC's tools.

"We just kept adding each product that they offer as we went along," Aldo Jr. said. "Their product is very intuitive, easy to work with and self-explanatory. They have a lot of nice features between scheduling and photo estimating. Really, it's the whole package, so it makes running an auto body shop pretty easy."



AC Automotive, with two locations in Connecticut, has always used CCC Intelligent Solutions' tools, and is thrilled to add the new Repair Cost Predictor to its lineup.

This summer, AC Automotive participated in a test of CCC's newest offering: Repair Cost Predictor, part of the CCC Engage digital marketing tool, designed to accelerate lead generation. The feature was made available to all shops with CCC Engage, at no extra charge, in mid-August.

Repair Cost Predictor helps shops spend less time writing estimates that may not result in work. A potential customer, using their phone, can add images of their vehicle to a chat with the shop, and CCC's AI-powered tool generates a predicted range for the cost of repair in seconds. The customer is then prompted to either get a full estimate or book a repair appointment. If the customer asks for an estimate or appointment, shops also receive these photos and the predicted range right into CCC ONE.

"My initial take is that I'm very happy with it," Aldo Jr. said.

"One of my concerns was that the predictor would be off," he said. "In this day and age, we are getting used to AI and new technology and how reliable it will be. I was thinking it would be on the low side for the cost predictor, but it's actually pretty accurate. I've been very surprised and happy to see how accurate the predictor is."

Customers have also been pleasantly surprised by the speed with which they can get an idea of how much a repair might cost.

"They've commented on how quickly they were able to get a response, which gave them some guidance," Aldo Jr. said.

The Repair Cost Predictor allows AC Automotive to get the ball rolling on a potential repair in a relatively simple manner without tying up a staff member on writing estimates that may not go anywhere, Aldo Jr. said.

"This is just another way for us to control costs without having someone simply dedicated to writing estimates all day long," he said. "It allows my staff to be freed up to do some other important tasks throughout the day."

Giving customers an immediate estimate also "weeds out" those who aren't serious about getting a safe and proper repair done on their vehicle, further saving the shop time, Aldo Jr. said.

"Once they get the lead, the ones that follow through are the ones who want their cars back to OEM specifications," he said. "The ones looking to cut corners usually won't follow through after the cost predictor."

After participating in the test, Aldo Jr. said his shop's two locations would absolutely continue using the Repair Cost Predictor.

"A customer calls, we can offer the feature and get the process going. People are used to instant gratification, so if you're not immediate, you're behind," he said.

AC Automotive Inc.

West Hartford & New Britain, CT
860-236-5020
ac-auto.com

Company At A Glance...

Type: Collision Repair
Facility Employees: 23
In Business Since: 1985
Number of Locations: Two
Combined Production Space: 14,000 square feet



Aldo Carducci Sr., center, established AC Automotive, now owned and operated by his sons, Guy, left, and Aldo Jr., right.



Technician John Hernandez is part of the team at AC Automotive.

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