

Equalizer® Glass Tools Help Shop to Say Goodbye to Outside Vendor



by **Autobody News Staff**

If you're a body shop owner and in your 30s, then it's likely your father or grandfather started the shop or you won the lottery.

In this case, **Arron Manuel**, 32, owner of *Manuel Collision Center* in Ada, OK, didn't need any assistance when he opened his own shop in 2008 with approximately \$11,000 he saved or borrowed.

By working for a body shop while still in high school, Manuel was confident he could make the leap to ownership without falling. The timing to open a new shop was unfortunate when the stock market bottomed out and finding a new facility was problematic.

"My first shop was at my folks' house," Manuel said. "We already had a family shop with two bays, so I doubled it in size and purchased a new paint booth, so I was set.

"At first it was just me doing it all—estimating, body work, glass work, parts procurement, painting and customer service. I was good at fixing cars, but didn't have much experience dealing with customers," he said. "But after a while, I started liking it and then I hired a painter part-time. Things took off from there and we never looked back.

"Once we get a customer, we keep them, and most of our clients came from word of mouth, because we stress service."

In just 12 years, Manuel Collision Center has grown from repairing 80 cars annually to more than 1,200 every year, with 25 employees in a spacious 30,000-square foot facility.

Now he has a lot of key people, including his brother, Steven, to help him handle the shop's operations.

"His passion is diving into things such as troubleshooting, analytics and assisting the techs with any problems they may be having," Manuel said.

One area where Manuel regained control and benefited as a result was his glass work. After it became more of a chore than a profit center, he decided to out-



Equipped and adept at using them all, every technician at *Manuel Collision Center* has their own Equalizer glass tools.

source it.

"We decided to sub out our glass work for one to two years, hoping it would make things easier," Manuel said. "We realized eventually that we could not control the quality and if something went wrong, we're liable. In some cases, they were doing damage to other components and scratching surfaces."

Luckily, around that same time, Manuel and his brother discovered Equalizer and its Glass Removal Kits.

"We began using the Raptor™, an awesome tool," he said. "So, we brought our glass work back in-house and it's been good since then. Without the Equalizer tools, we would never have been able to do it all ourselves."

The two Equalizer glass tools that have become integral to Manuel's production today are the Viper™ and the Ambush™.

"We remove and replace a fair number of windshields monthly, so we use these tools a lot and they never let us down," he said.

"The Equalizer® Viper™ is a wire removal device designed for small quarter glass removals, but can also be used on windshields and back glasses," he said. "It's small, light and easy to maneuver. It enables us to do our work without damaging the pinch welds or anything else."

Manuel's techs use a 1/2-in. drive ratchet with a 1-1/8-in. socket slipped over the shaft of the Viper™ to rotate the wire reel. The double direction capability of the reel allows for optimum use, and the magnetic points on the ratchet

shaft ensure the ratchet stays firmly attached to the tool, even in steep/vertical situations.

Equipped and ready to act in a moment, all of Manuel's technicians have their own Equalizer tools in their arsenal* and know how to use them.

"In their toolboxes, they have Equalizer tools designed specifically for every type of application they may encounter," Manuel said. "We never scratch panels or break anything, even when we work on side windows where there isn't always a lot of space to operate in."

Getting all of his techs up to speed with their Equalizer glass tools involved a lot of training, Manuel said.

"We showed my guys how to use the Viper™ and Ambush™ while they were working on cars, and it was really effective because they became very proficient with each tool rather quickly," he said. "If they ever have any questions, there are several videos on YouTube right now that are worth their weight in gold."

"It's like anything else, practice makes perfect. We used to have to stop the repair process or blueprinting at the glass stage, but not anymore."

The glass tools from Equalizer have enabled Manuel and his techs to do things they couldn't do quickly and efficiently before.

Now he can list "auto glass repair" on his shop's menu of services confidently, knowing he is using the finest glass tools available in the collision repair industry today.

Manuel Collision Center

Location: Ada, OK
(580) 310-9335

Company At A Glance...

Type: Collision Repair

Facility Employees: 25

In Business Since: 2008

Number of Locations: One

Production Space:

30,000 square feet



Owner **Arron Manuel** at *Manuel Collision Center* with one of his youngest employees, son Carter.



Manuel Collision Center has grown rapidly since it opened its doors in 2008 and credits much of its success to vendors such as Equalizer.

Equalizer

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