

# ECR Improves Color and Personality-Matching with Sikkens

**AkzoNobel**

by **Autobody News Staff**

In June 2020, *European Collision Repair* (ECR) converted to a new paint line: Sikkens by AkzoNobel.

According to **Andrew Suggs**, vice president of the four-shop MSO, “Sikkens’ clearcoats are the best product on the market—they edge out the competition on cost and quality. The fully tintable sealers from Sikkens changed the game by allowing ECR painters to reduce basecoat usage, which saves money while getting a better product and improving efficiency.”

AkzoNobel partnered with ECR for the transition.

“We did one location at a time, with AkzoNobel spending a week in each shop, and then our head painter, **Eric**, would follow up with an additional week at the shop. By the time we wrapped up, Eric had dialed into the product’s nuances and was able to get our last couple guys up to speed very quickly,” Suggs said. “AkzoNobel and ECR worked as a team, and that joint effort made the conversion process incredibly easy.”

While Suggs is extremely pleased with the cost and quality of the Sikkens line, that’s not what he raves about most.

“Our main reason for choosing the Sikkens line was the extras. A good painter can spray with any high-quality paint, but what do the paint suppliers offer beyond paint, in terms of business development, growth and analytics?”

Studying psychology in college has impacted the way Suggs runs ECR.

“I tend to look at things differently. Each person is unique, so their responses vary; you can’t expect one person to view things the same as another, but when you understand people—how to talk to them, motivate them—you maximize their potential and their output. That leads to better workers, but first you have to understand their psyches.”

Suggs offered an example: “People respond better to colors than words, so our shops are color-coded to help with everyday organization and maximize efficiency. With some people, you have to be blunt for it to sink in; others require sugar-coating, so you don’t hurt



By identifying key indicators and traits of top performers in various roles, ECR and AkzoNobel are working to develop a platform that will help shops increase employee longevity and build a more stable core.

their feelings.”

After unproductive talks with his previous paint supplier about offering a personality assessment that shop owners and managers could leverage, Suggs began shopping, and when he mentioned the idea to AkzoNobel, they informed him they already had the groundwork for such a program in place, though it had only been used by one other shop.

“AkzoNobel was completely supportive of my desire to develop a platform from that, so we converted paint lines,” Suggs stated. “We work directly with DiSC to conduct the assessments and have begun using it as a pre-hiring tool with the goal of weeding out the employees that would only last for six months.”

By identifying key indicators and traits of top performers in various roles, ECR and AkzoNobel are working to develop a platform that will help shops increase longevity and build a more stable core. It can also evaluate an overall census of shop personalities to determine if a potential new addition is a good fit.

“It seems to be working really well so far,” Suggs said. “In addition to weeding out several employees who wouldn’t have worked out, we had a guy interview for an estimator position, but the assessment indicated he’s better suited for parts. We’ve also been able to move some folks around to different positions and locations that are better suited to their mindset and efficiency.”

“Leveraging personality traits and dispositions allows us to get the most of our employees with-

out leading to stress or burnout. Work/life balance is important for employee happiness. We’re taking a new approach, and it seems to be working well so far,” Suggs continued. “Since May 2020, we’ve hired 21 people, and we have not lost a single person since we developed this program with AkzoNobel. We’re refining the model, but hopefully, other shops will be able to leverage personality assessments in the near future.”

ECR and AkzoNobel are also collaborating to facilitate local painter and body technician roundtables, allowing collision repair professionals in similar roles to compare notes that help refine the process.

“It’s so easy for management to get caught up in the mundane day-to-day workload that they can’t see the forest for the trees. Good body technicians are extremely intelligent, and they have some great ideas. If they are invested in your company, they’ll share valuable feedback that makes all of us better by raising our standard of work.”

Alluding to constant advancements in vehicle technology, Suggs added, “We can’t better our industry unless we do the fundamental things correctly, and by sharing information, we ensure everyone is at the top of their game. In turn, that benefits the customer and the industry as a whole.”

“We have to keep moving forward and bettering ourselves. Quality products and service survive good and bad times, but the subpar items eventually go away. We refuse to be subpar.”

## European Collision Repair

Location: Jonesboro and Sandy Springs, GA; Antioch and Nashville, TN  
(678) 973-4379

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

### Company At A Glance...

**Type:** Collision Repair

**Facility Employees:** 80

**In Business Since:** 1979

**Number of Locations:** Four

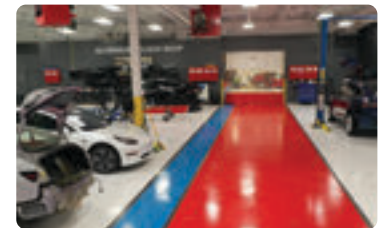
**DRP Programs:** Two

**Combined Production Space:**

105,000 square feet



ECR’s painters love spraying with Sikkens from AkzoNobel because “they edge out the competition on cost and quality.”



**Suggs** believes that understanding employees psychologically leads to a more productive work environment, such as using color-coding to organize the shop and enhance efficiency.

### AkzoNobel

1845 Maxwell Drive

Troy, MI 48084

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

Facebook: @AkzoNobelRefinish

Twitter: @AkzoNobel\_AACNA

Instagram: @AkzoNobelRefinish