State of the Market Report

Technology Adoption Within Automotive Repair Shops

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The State of the Market: Technology Adoption Within Automotive Repair Shops

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Introduction

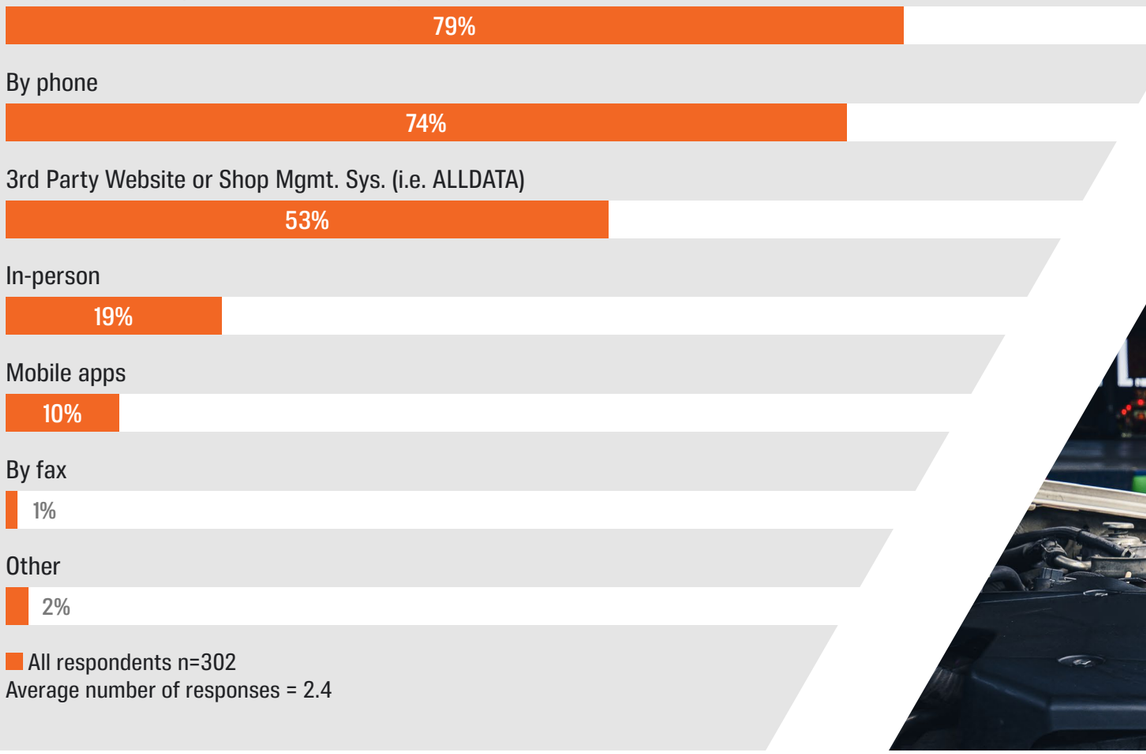
The automotive service industry is facing a turning point as vehicles become more complex and customer expectations continue to rise. New tools — from AI to ADAS calibration — are reshaping how shops operate. The question is no longer whether shops will adopt new technology, but which technologies will deliver the greatest value and keep shops competitive. Adapting new equipment and services is essential for shop owners seeking to meet customer expectations in today's modern automotive repair service market.

In December 2025, Endeavor Business Intelligence partnered with AutoZone to survey 300 shop owners and service managers responsible for technology decisions in their facilities. This study focuses on the technologies incorporated into current shop services, the desire to incorporate new forms of technology in multiple facets of the business, and the service equipment and training used in modern repair facilities. With continued advancements in vehicle technology, this study examines how independent automotive repair shops are responding by adopting new services, equipment, and certifications.

1 Age and Technology Adoption

Many automotive repair facilities are led by experienced owners and managers with decades in the industry. This survey supports that theory with 48% of respondents managing or owning their shop for 20 years or longer. Seventy-six percent of respondents have managed their business for at least 11 years. While adopting new technologies may prove difficult for some, there are certain service advancements and business enhancements that interest shop owners of all ages.

How does your shop currently order parts?



All respondents n=302
Average number of responses = 2.4

Although 64% of respondents were over age 50, many are actively adopting digital tools, showing that training and convenience — not age — drive adoption. One of the most common ways shop managers aged 51 and up order parts is by ordering directly online from part-supplier websites. It may come as a surprise to learn that shop managers aged 51 and older use these supplier websites at 11% higher rates than those aged 25-40. While experience and tenure in a repair facility can sometimes lead to resistance to change, shop owners of all ages are already using or are interested in adopting many modern technologies.

2 Adapting to Service and Repair Changes

There are ongoing updates to the systems in modern vehicles, and both advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) and electric vehicle (EV) services are becoming increasingly prevalent in repair shops. Respondents have mixed feelings regarding whether investing in services for EVs or vehicles equipped with ADAS is worthwhile. Many independent repair shops have not yet invested in EV and ADAS services, creating a significant opportunity for early adopters. While 51% of shop owners reported having service equipment to support EVs, only 18% of shops currently offer ADAS calibration, highlighting a major growth opportunity for shops willing to invest early. This ranked lower than other specialized service equipment, highlighting a potential market gap that shops could capitalize on by offering services that incorporate emerging technologies.

As new vehicles are continuously purchased and older model years reach the end of their service life, repair shops may not be ready for the new age of the automotive industry. Customers who want to own vehicles with the latest equipment and advanced accessories may be reluctant to take their vehicles to a shop that lacks the necessary equipment to fully service them. Fifty-five percent of shop owners and managers believe their shop is not prepared to service electric vehicles, while only 10% strongly agree that their shop uses the latest technology. This evidence supports the idea that independent shops are currently reluctant to take on the risks of offering services for EVs and ADAS-equipped vehicles, which could start to create issues for long-term customer retention and profitability.

CURRENT USE AND FUTURE ADOPTION OF REPAIR TECHNOLOGIES

More than ***three out of five respondents*** use ***1234yf HVAC service equipment*** (61%) or ***Oscilloscopes*** (61%) equipment for vehicle services or diagnostics. On average, respondents use two of the options.

3 Current Technology Used for Improving Shop Business

For shop owners, finding ways to boost operational efficiency, support their employees, and elevate customer experience are always top priorities. Many shop owners are increasingly using technology to improve efficiency, customer communication, and workflow management.

The most used pieces of technology include online parts ordering systems, service information websites, and electronic customer communications such as emails or text messages regarding service updates. Shops are not just using online services to order parts or look up repair information; they are using computers to manage all aspects of their business.

TYPES OF TECHNOLOGIES UTILIZED

Technologies used most often to aid shop management are:

Online parts ordering systems
(89%)

Online service information
(75%)

Electronic customer communications
(69%)

Electronic repair ordering systems
(66%)

On average, respondents say their shops use nearly seven different technologies.

Conversely, some technologies may be underutilized by independent shops across the industry. Only 43% of shops use digital inspection sheets, even though these tools often increase repair approvals and improve customer trust. Despite a high adoption of electronic communication with customers, only 47% of shops reported using online appointment and scheduling systems. With over half of shops lacking these support services, those that implement technologies like digital inspections and online messaging can stand out, strengthen customer relationships, and gain a significant competitive edge in today's market.

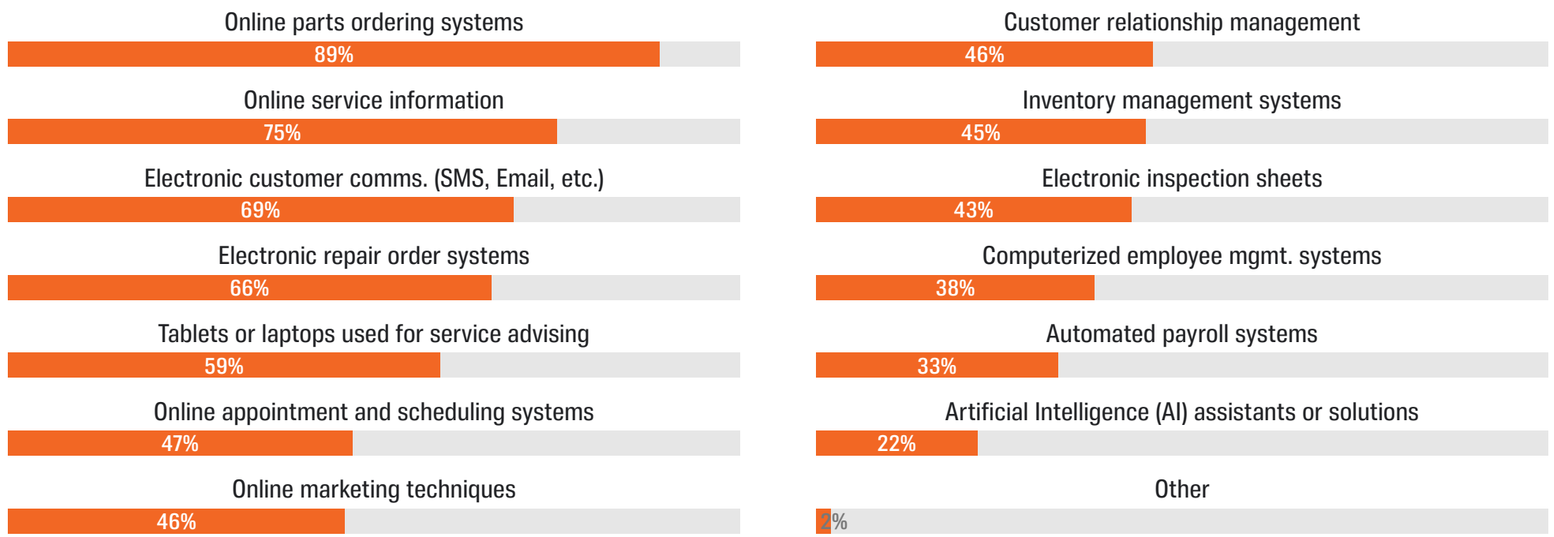
Technology Utilization in Shop Business Practices

Communications and Shop Support

Technology has been quickly integrated in some areas of the automotive industry, but it has taken longer to gain traction in the business operations of independent shops. Communication with customers and suppliers has shifted toward digital channels, improving speed and transparency. While 74% of shops call parts stores by phone to order parts, 79% use supplier websites. Even though shops are still calling to order parts, most are already using or are eager to adopt online services. Sixty-nine percent of shop managers preferred using a desktop computer, compared with 9% who preferred a landline phone, showing that even when shops use both methods, online ordering is by far the preferred approach.

Younger shop owners are leading the way in digitizing shop communication with their clients. Sixty-nine percent of shops currently use an electronic form of communication to alert customers of repair status and updates, but this number jumps to 87% for shops managed by those aged 25-40. The same age group is using online marketing techniques 13% more than the average across all age groups, showing that the industry's future workforce is trusting technology to help propel business and grow customer relationships.

What types of technology does your business currently use to aid shop management?

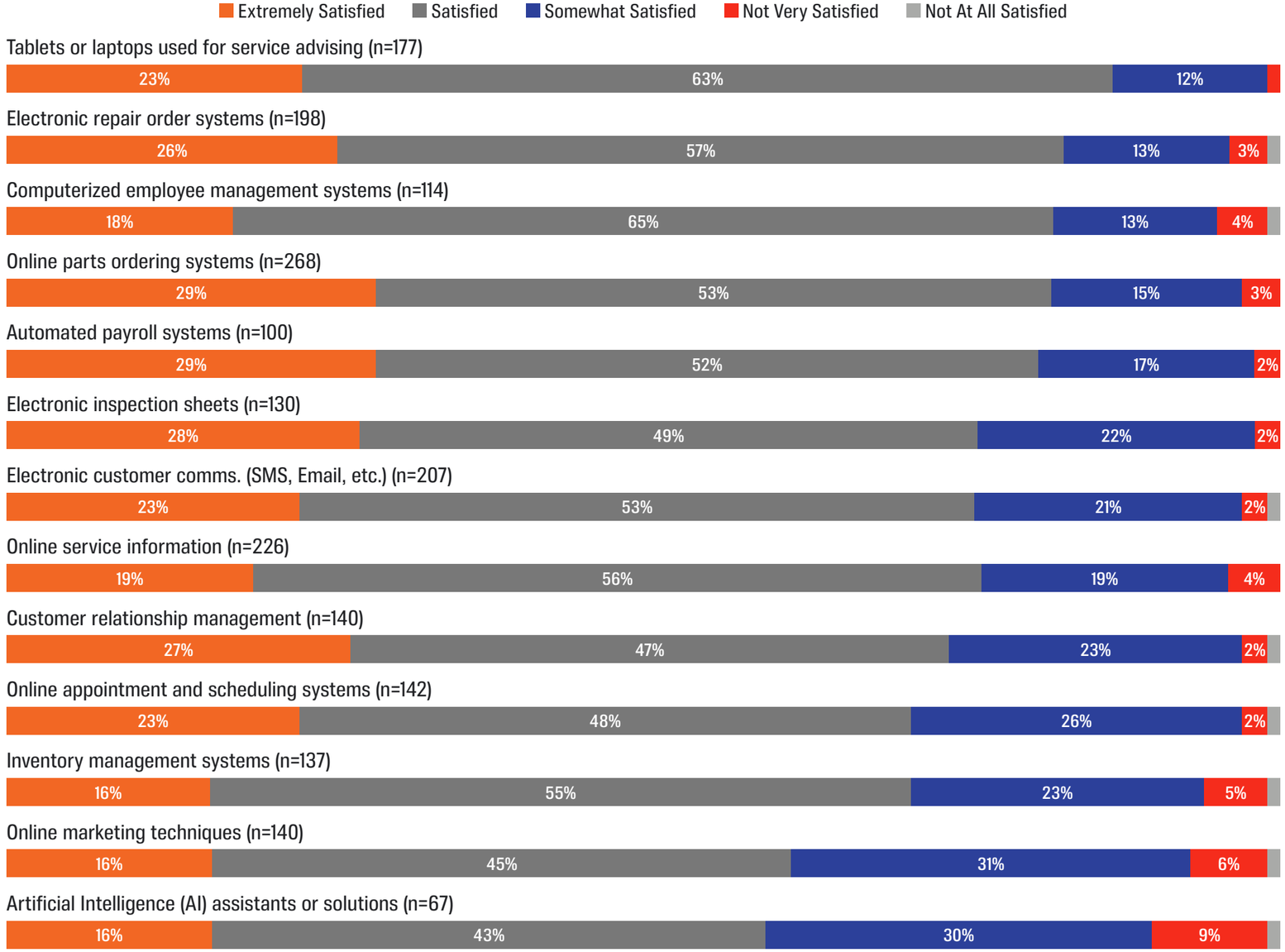


All respondents n=302

Average number of responses = 6.8

Overall, while shops are satisfied with the technology they currently use to support their daily business activities, there are plenty of opportunities to grow their business or make day-to-day operations more efficient by incorporating additional technologies on the market. Among independent repair shops, 66% currently use electronic repair order systems, and of those using them, 83% report being satisfied or extremely satisfied with their current system. Even though only 38% of respondents currently use computerized employee management systems, there can be long-term benefits, such as reductions in paperwork errors and providing extra data on employee performance. Eighty-three percent of respondents reported being satisfied or extremely satisfied with the current computerized employee management system they are using. These findings suggest that while many shops are already benefiting from technology, further adoption of employee management systems and electronic repair order programs could help more shops increase efficiency and streamline operations.

Overall, how satisfied are you with your shop's current utilization of technology for the following?



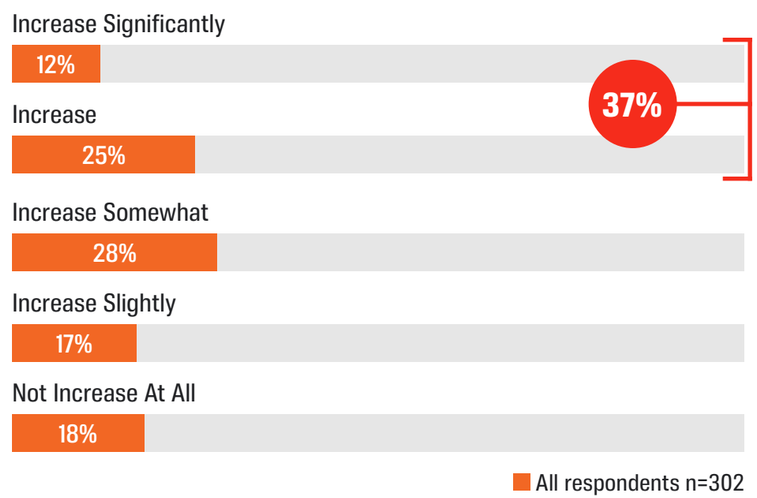
Artificial Intelligence (AI) Incorporation

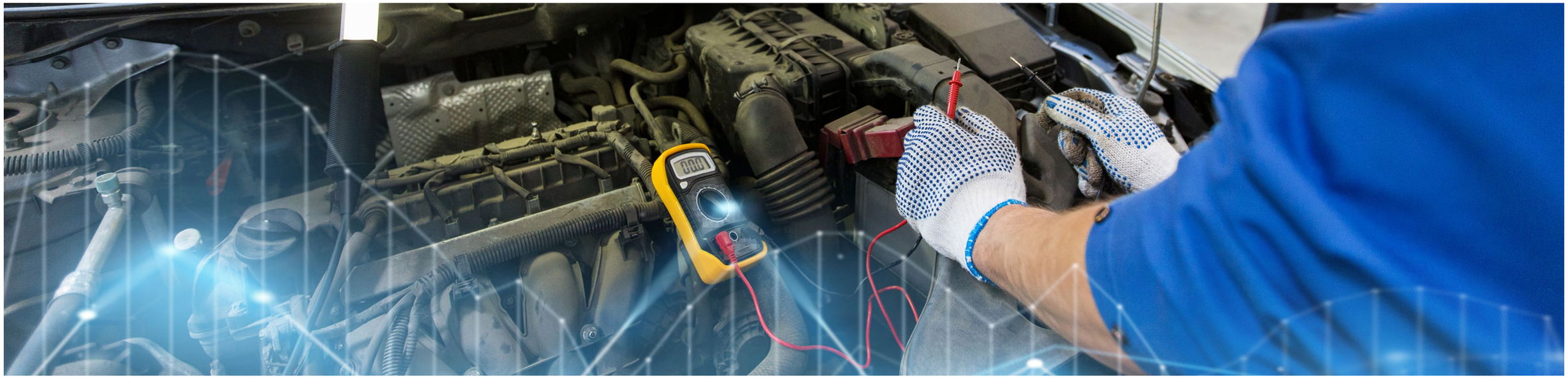
AI is being adopted across industries around the globe, and the automotive sector is no exception. Independent shop owners are proving more reluctant to adopt the technology, but may be beginning to warm up to the idea. Currently, only 22% of shops use AI assistants or solutions in their normal business practices, the lowest utilization rate among all options.

Despite AI being utilized at a low rate, 90% of shops that are using it report being at least “somewhat satisfied” with its performance. This is uplifting news, since it shows that current adoptees are benefiting from the technology. AI can help shop owners in multiple capacities, including rewriting technician recommendations to better communicate vehicle issues to customers, creating digital advertising posts, and helping with streamlining internal operating procedures.

Research suggests that shop owners and management are interested in adopting AI strategies and solutions in the future. One in four shop managers reported that they would like to start using AI assistants or solutions in their current business practices, more than any other option in the survey. Thirty-seven percent of respondents believe that their shop will increase its usage of AI in a meaningful way within the next five years. This reflects a general openness to AI among business owners in the automotive industry across all age ranges, even though adoption remains relatively low today.

Over the next five years, how do you see your shop’s usage of AI changing?





Current Use and Future Adoption of Repair Technologies

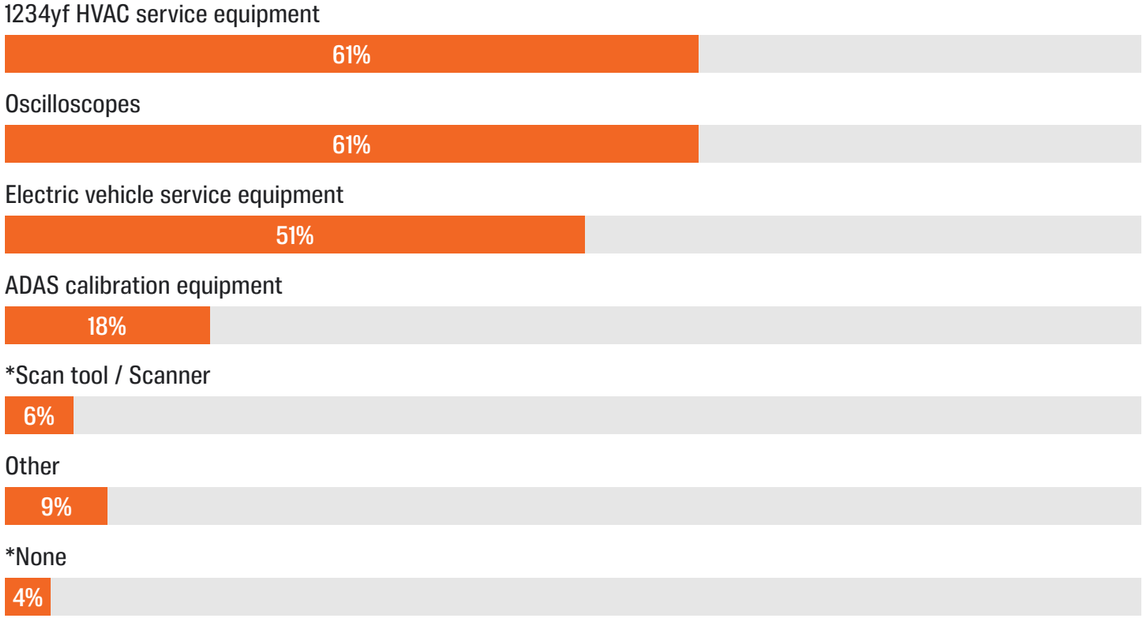
Service Equipment and Emerging Technology Readiness

As vehicles become increasingly advanced with cutting-edge technologies and driving features, repair procedures are growing more complex. As vehicle systems become more advanced, repair procedures require specialized tools and technician training.

The data suggests that shop management is motivated to invest in the latest and most advanced tools to better support their customer base. When shop decision-makers were asked what would be most impactful to their business, 50% said that increased availability of diagnostic tools and equipment would help, while 40% selected “improved service efficiency” as the most impactful way to grow their business. As shops continue to strive to improve their efficiency, locating and implementing the latest diagnostic equipment can play a key role in that effort.

The diagnostic equipment currently used in shops reflects what they are using to improve services for customers and reduce diagnostic times. When shop managers were asked what equipment they currently use, 61% reported using R-1234yf HVAC service equipment, indicating that most shops are prepared to service the latest HVAC systems. Sixty-one percent of independent repair facilities also use oscilloscopes for diagnostic purposes, indicating that the practice of only using scan tools is becoming obsolete. Shop management and technicians alike are seeing the value of oscilloscopes for more in-depth diagnostics that require a visualization of the vehicle’s concern. Despite the adoption of newer service technologies, overall shop sentiment toward technology usage remains mixed, suggesting an opportunity for greater confidence and integration moving forward.

Which of the following equipment does your shop currently use for vehicle services or diagnostics?



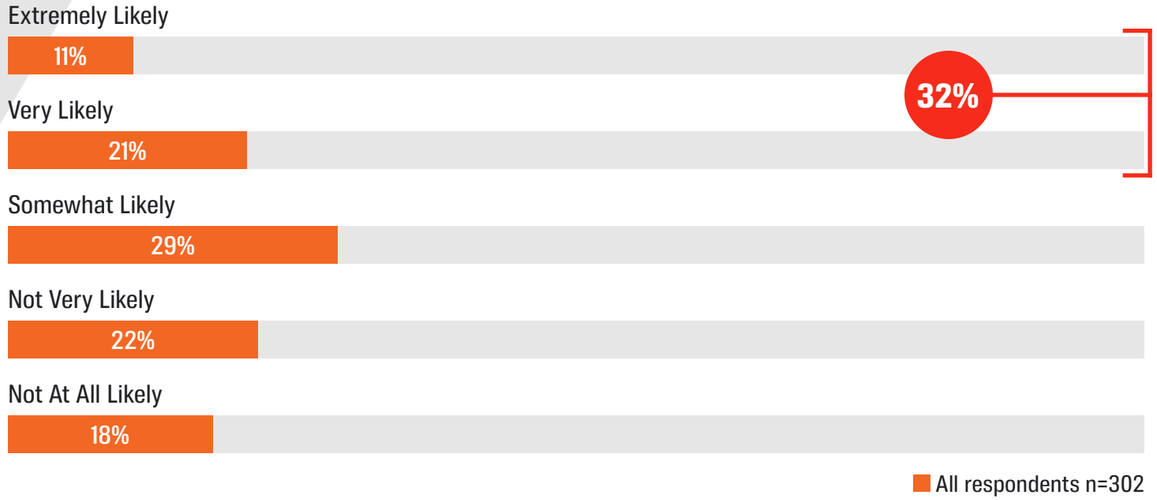
*Tallied from “Other (please specify)”

All respondents n=302
Average number of responses = 2.1

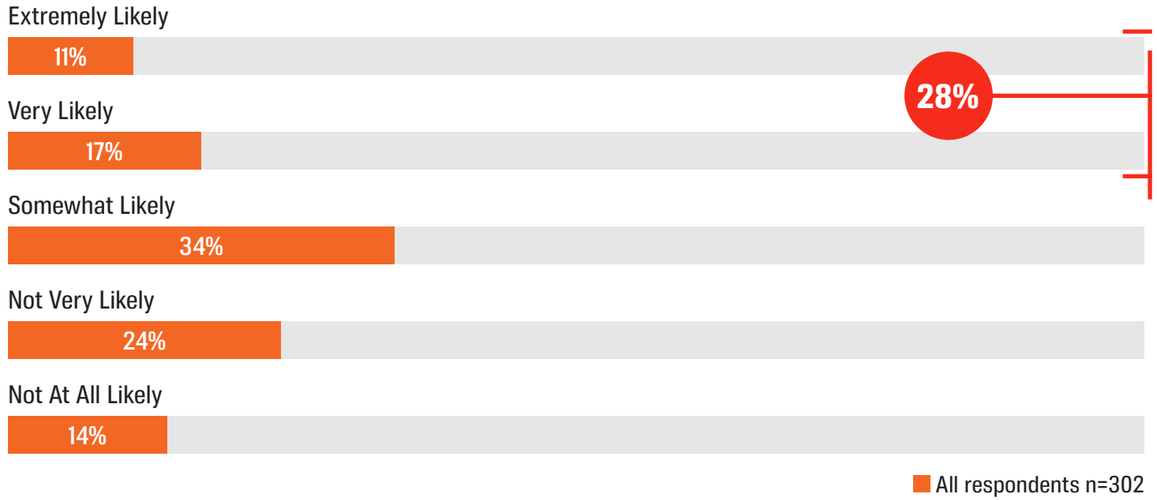
When automotive repair facilities were surveyed on their attitudes toward technology implementation regarding service, most agreed that it is necessary to stay relevant in the industry. In fact, 70% agree or strongly agree that technology adoption is crucial to remain competitive in the market. However, many question whether offering services on ADAS-equipped vehicles and/or EVs is profitable. Shop owners are hesitant to purchase costly equipment to service these systems, especially when the representation of these vehicles in the field is relatively low. Only 12% of shop managers "strongly agree," and 28% "agree" that ADAS and EVs are relevant investment opportunities. Fully adopting these new technologies remains an uphill battle for shops, yet those willing to invest in the setup costs for servicing advanced systems on vehicles could gain a competitive advantage in the market.

Shop profitability and the potential to expand services appear to be closely linked, yet many owners remain hesitant to adopt emerging technologies. Only 32% of shops are very or extremely likely to expand their EV services in the next five years, and only 28% are planning to expand ADAS services. This suggests that adopting emerging technologies is met with resistance from shop owners and may limit the types of vehicles independent shops can accommodate in the near future. However, when asked which technologies could drive business growth, respondents favored expanding services for emerging technologies like EVs and ADAS 19% more than adding computers and tablets, and 21% more than improving parts-ordering technology. There may be greater interest in adopting these service practices as more information from the industry becomes available.

How likely is your shop to expand its electric vehicle services within the next five years?



How likely is your shop to expand its ADAS services within the next five years?



Certifications and Service Information Utilization

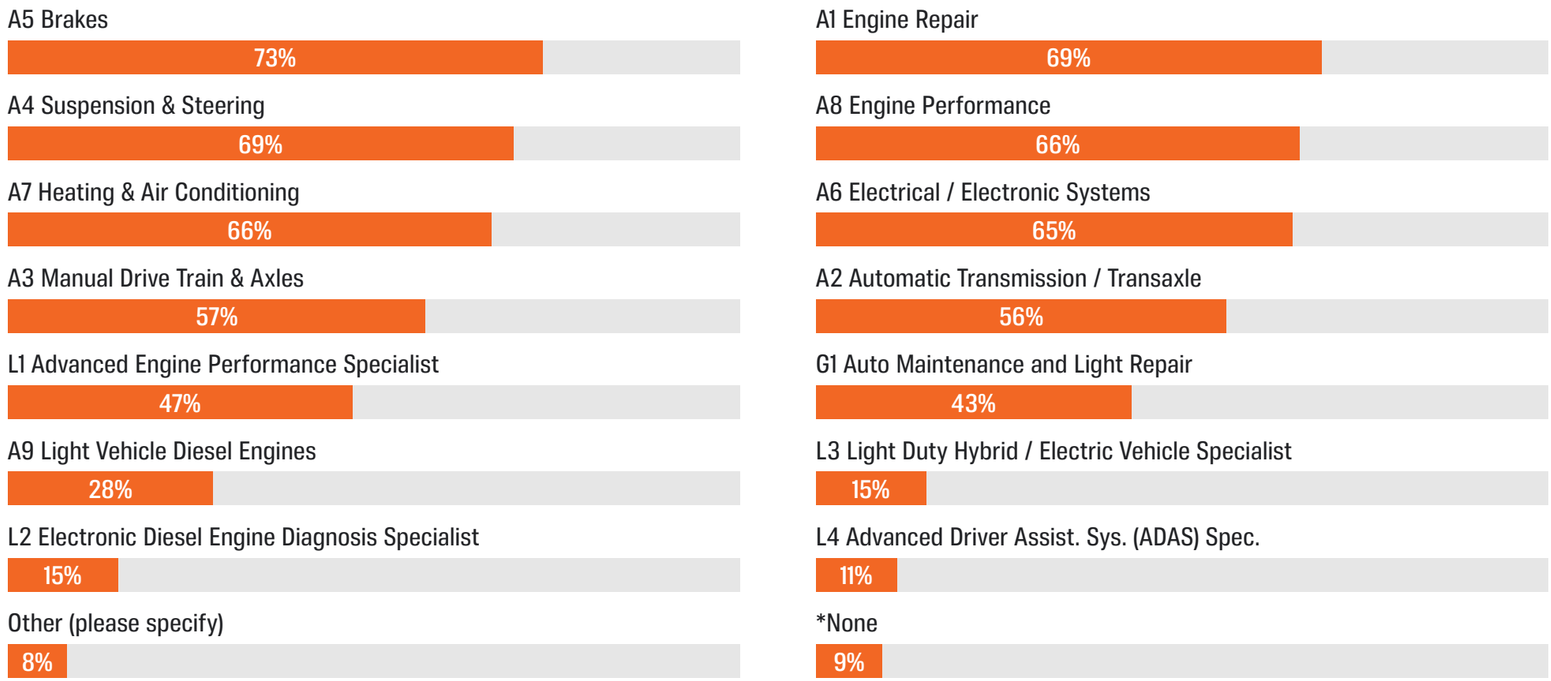
Automotive Industry Certifications

Independent automotive repair facilities have different training and certification requirements, but historically, the industry has supported proper training for technicians and employees. Most owners reported that their technicians held at least one Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certification, with 73% of shops having someone certified in A5 Brakes, 69% in A1 Engine Repair, and 69% in A4 Steering and Suspension. On average, shop owners reported that technicians in their shops were certified in seven different skill areas. This demonstrates that technicians are earning certifications in the core areas serviced in shops and that shops clearly recognize the value of programs like ASE.

Not all skill areas are represented equally in repair facilities, and technicians face limitations when pursuing certifications. Only 29% of technicians reported being certified in A9 Light Vehicle Diesel Engines, and only 15% held the L2 Electronic Diesel Engine Diagnostic Specialist certification. Currently, independent shops service diesel vehicles at a lower rate than gasoline engines, and the certification data reflects that trend. However, larger shops have technicians who hold diesel certifications at a much higher rate. Forty-eight percent of shops with 11 or more technicians have at least one technician with the A9 certification, and 38% have a technician with the ASE L2. Larger shops that employ more technicians generally have more certified staff who can offer a variety of services.

In which skill areas does at least one of your technicians hold an ASE certification?

*Tallied from "Other (please specify)"
All respondents n=302
Average number of responses = 7.0



Currently, not many technicians in the field hold certification for ADAS and EV services, correlating with shop management's current sentiment on these emerging technologies. Only 15% of shops have a technician who holds either an L3 Light Duty Hybrid/ Electric Vehicle Specialist or an L4 Advanced Driver Assistance System Specialist. Once again, shop owners and management are not necessarily convinced about the value of holding these certifications. Although 16% of shops view ASE certifications as extremely valuable and 25% as very valuable, only 8% consider emerging technologies ASE certifications extremely valuable, and 23% very valuable. This gap suggests that while traditional certifications remain a priority, emerging technologies have yet to be given the same level of importance by shop management.

Service Information

Reliable service information is essential to the daily work technicians perform to properly diagnose and repair vehicles. Seventy-five percent of shop managers reported using service information to support their business with shop management tasks. Service information is not only beneficial to technicians but also helps shop managers and owners estimate labor and parts costs and order parts directly from suppliers. Currently, 53% of shops reported they are using management systems through service information suppliers to order parts. Together, these findings highlight that service information is a critical tool not just for repairs but also for the efficient management and operation of a shop.

When it comes to the service information shops use, it seems to be an even split, with most shops using multiple sources. Around half of shops are using some form of major aftermarket service information. Also, 26% of respondents reported using OEM-provided service information. On average, shops use at least two of these software options as well, adding to the information they provide to technicians and furthering the idea that shops are trying to give technicians the best resources available. These responses show that shop owners prefer to use a variety of service information, with little bias toward any particular provider.

Survey Conclusions: The State of the Market, Technology Adoption Within Automotive Repair Shops

Independent repair shops are steadily adopting new technology, but the pace of vehicle innovation is accelerating. Shops that invest strategically in digital workflows, technician training, and emerging services will be best positioned to grow.

Shop owners are increasingly using online parts ordering and the concept of incorporating AI assistants into their business practices, but they may need more convincing before fully adopting EV and ADAS services on a broad scale. Generally, shops hire technicians certified in at least one skill area under ASE's standards, and most shops have all seven skill areas covered among their currently employed technicians. As the industry continues to adopt new technologies, shop management should consider the following to grow their business and stay competitive:

- Many shops are using electronic communications with customers and ordering parts through online parts supplier websites to streamline business processes.
- EV and ADAS services are not yet widely adopted across shops, but many service facilities plan to add them in the future.
- Shops are adding specialty services and diagnostic tools, such as R-1234yf HVAC service machines and oscilloscopes, to stay relevant as vehicles evolve.
- Specialized services like diesel repair and ADAS have low rates of ASE certification among technicians, which may create future marketable opportunities.

Following these considerations can help shop managers and owners make proper decisions when selecting which technology they want to incorporate and implement in their repair facility.

Next Steps for Shops in 2026

As the future of the automotive repair industry approaches, there are many useful innovations and adaptations that owners and management can consider to ensure the best possible outcomes for their shop. Each technology discussed can enhance shop efficiency and help management stay current with the latest trends in industry. The following are recommendations for what shops can do to stay up to date with the most recent technology trends used in shops in 2026:

- Shops should consider using digital inspection sheets to improve operational efficiency and offer a comprehensive way to store and share customer vehicle records.
- Offering modern communication methods for service advisors can improve customer experience and attract a larger customer base.
- Adding EV/ADAS service equipment and exploring training opportunities for technicians can help draw customers who own vehicles equipped with advanced technologies.
- Exploring AI tools can help make business processes more effective and efficient while also assisting in simple problem-solving.

About AutoZone®

AutoZone is the leading provider of automotive parts with over 7,000 stores and growing. With a world-class distribution network, AutoZone makes it easy for shops to get the parts they need quickly. They have made significant investments to improve parts availability and expand our late-model and import coverage across all business lines. Their dedicated Commercial Service Team is focused on supporting customers to help them keep bays turning.

About ALLDATA®

ALLDATA is the industry's #1 choice for unedited mechanical and collision OEM repair information, diagnostic solutions, shop management software, and support services, trusted by more than 400,000 technicians in over 115,000 shops worldwide.

In December of 2025, AutoZone's research partner, Endeavor Business Intelligence, surveyed 300 automobile repair shop owners and managers responsible for making decisions regarding technology implementation in their automotive repair shops. All shop owners and managers responded from independent, non-franchised repair shops.

About The Survey