

When FenderBender last spoke to Domenico Nigro in 2012 (fenderbender.com/community/con), he mentioned his focus on innovation and finding ways to help Nigro's Auto Body in Philadelphia stand out. Fast forward five years and he's definitely staying true to his roots and getting the shop recognized. Nigro's Auto Body was recently ranked in *Fortune's* 2017 Inner City 100.

On any given day, you'll find Nigro looking through leaflets of courses he could take to continue to improve his leadership, communication and negotiation skills; talking on the phone; greeting guests; and checking in with his team. He's a multitasker through and through.

With 25 years of experience, smooth negotiation skills and a line-tuned daily routine, there's no questioning why customers from when the business first opened 35 years ago make Nigro's their go-to shop.

AS TOLD TO KATHLEEN SAPIEN

Basically, my day starts at 8:30. I try to do a morning meeting with my staff. We go over production and I walk through the day's schedule with my technicians.

We aren't a DRP shop; we really don't have a lot of work scheduled. Personally, I don't like DRPs. I don't think they would be beneficial to our business.

We focus on the customer, safety and making sure the car gets repaired properly. The shop is like a doctor or an attorney; you have to fully comprehend the customer's needs in order to best serve them.

We don't cut corners. We try to do everything according to specifications. We don't want to wind up like John Eagle or other shops. I think insurance companies and shops need to work together to protect the customer.

Our shop is a little different; we don't schedule out a lot of work. Instead, we have people that just come in and drop off keys.

Throughout the day, I am working with or

negotiating with estimators. Throughout the years, I have gotten really good at negotiating. I'm also very comfortable with negotiating with adjusters. Whenever they come into the shop, whoever it is, they know they are there to pay a fair claim. If there is a conflict on the pricing they know I'll fight for it and defend the shop. I'll ask them, "When have you gotten a complaint about us?" I know they haven't so there is no reason for them to have an issue with our pricing.

It's a complicated business. Not only are you solving customer problems, but you are also negotiating on the daily. There's a difference in our industry.

The shop's culture was designed by my dad, when he opened the shop. The shop painter and technician that we have now both started working at Nigro's in the early day, back around the time that the shop first opened.

Family is very important to me and to our shop, so I treat the team as such because we've all grown up together. One of

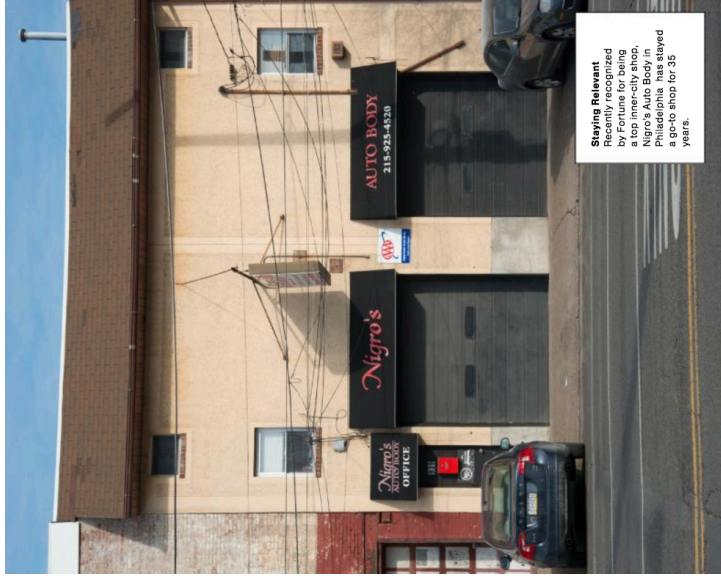
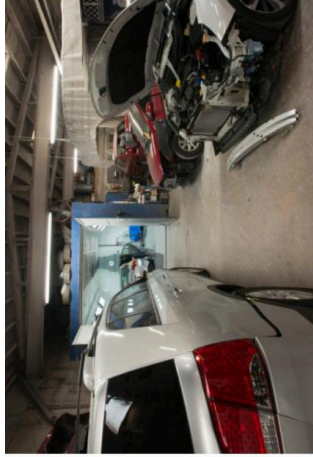
the guys used to babysit me and my siblings when we were kids. They are family, they have been a part of my life as I've grown up in the industry.

We talk about everything, to the point where my team doesn't question repairs compared to dollars. We are so concerned with the quality of work. They are more worried about the car leaving fully repaired.

We don't get comebacks. When a car is done, it's done. We have a log that we keep on comebacks. And, you know what, it hasn't been filled in 24 years.

I can multitask; it's one of the things at which I excel. I can be on the phone talking to someone and writing up an estimate all at the same time. I don't necessarily like it, but it's something I needed to learn to do throughout the years so that I could work with customer and my team to provide the best service.

I don't care if you've been a tech for 50



Staying Relevant
Recently recognized by *Fortune* for being the 100th largest U.S. business, Nigro's Auto Body in Philadelphia has stayed a go-to shop for 35 years.

NIGRO'S AUTO BODY
LOCATION:
PHILADELPHIA
SIZE:
3,000 SQUARE FEET
(ESTIMATED)
3 FULL-TIME AND ONE
PART-TIME EMPLOYEE
AVERAGE MONTHLY
CAR COUNT:
30 (AVERAGE COST
PER JOB IS \$4,500)
ANNUAL REVENUE:
\$1.4 MILLION
(ESTIMATED)



IDENTIFYING CUSTOMER PAIN POINTS:

TO HELP CUSTOMERS, NIGRO DEVELOPED AN UNDERSTANDING FOR CUSTOMERS' PAIN POINTS. HE OUTLINES A CHECKLIST FOR DOING THAT:

1. Determine who your customer really is.
2. Determine what the customer really needs.
 - a. Are they scared to make a claim?
 - b. Are they afraid of insurance to go up?
3. What other problems is this person trying to solve? How can you go above and beyond the vehicle repair?
4. Develop an emotional attachment with your customers.

NIGRO'S GO-TO NEGOTIATING TECHNIQUES

1. Categorize insurance companies. Ask yourself: What will the insurer pay for and what won't they pay for?
2. What are the adjusters good at? What do and don't they understand?
3. Don't downgrade quality. You can help them make a better decision and knowledge base.
4. Know what the adjuster does and doesn't pay for.
5. Understand the adjuster, build conversations with them. Ask the adjuster questions like: How many times have you had a call from one of my customers?

BMW, just to name a few. You have to actively look for classes that can enrich you and your business. There's always room for improvement.

I try to leave the shop by 4:30. My team knows how to get things done when I'm not around, so I don't have to worry about the shop once I leave for the day. We've all been doing this for so long, it's a natural process for us. After being in the business for so long, my team understands what needs to be done.

There's no boss here, my dad's the real boss. I just sit behind the desk. We're a team, we work together. I'll jump in whenever I can and help out. I understand repairs, estimates, negotiating, customer logic.

The things I'm not great at, I ask others to help me out with. I would rather work on what is the highest and most productive thing in the shop than focus on getting better at something I'm not good at. Talking to customers is the biggest ROI for me. ■