

PDR Plans

PROLONG NEW-CAR LOOK

Paintless dent repair improves customers' satisfaction with their purchase and motivates them to return to your dealership throughout their ownership cycle. It's also another opportunity for profit in the F&I office.

BY LINDSEY BIRD



In the past several years, there has been an emergence of ding and dent warranty-style protection plans made available to new- and pre-owned vehicle buyers through dealer F&I departments. Customers want to maintain that new-car look as long as possible, and ding and dent protection is seeing tremendous growth.

These programs are designed to bring the customer back to the dealership, which further increases additional service up-sell opportunities. Typically, these plans are available in three-, four- and five-year options and enable dealers to earn about \$300 per plan in profit.



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Some of the most successful auto dealers have incorporated these plans into their F&I offerings as an additional way to build incremental profit and increase value and customer retention. Working with a reputable partner and a proven paintless dent removal (PDR) strategy is the easiest way to incorporate and facilitate a ding and dent protection plan through F&I.

Selecting a PDR provider can be a difficult decision for any dealer. A program in which you truly see the benefits from across sales, service and finance requires experience and resources. Dealers should research and ask questions of their provider prior to investing with a PDR company.

A good provider will have researched state compliance requirements and positioned its product within those guidelines. Ensuring the program is backed by an insurance carrier filed in each state gives important peace of mind to dealers. Selecting the right partner can benefit your dealership and drive new opportunity through the door, and more importantly, keep it coming back.

To successfully sell PDR protection plans through F&I, the plan must be added to the F&I menu-selling procedure. Most dealers offer

multiple packages (e.g. gold, silver, bronze, etc.) and ding and dent protection should be included in all packages. PDR may also be bundled into an appearance package with products such as paint sealant, fabric protection and tire & wheel protection.

PDR has become an accepted repair technique that has dramatically evolved in the auto repair industry over the last 20 years. PDR is a process that reforms metal back to its original condition without sanding, filling, painting or using traditional auto body repair techniques.

This process evolved out of factory production lines in Europe using skilled craftsmen known as “dingers” or “tanners” to “rub” out minor dings and dents from the metal prior to painting. With the advancement of more flexible paint finishes, PDR is now commercially used to repair dents and dings on vehicles without damage to the integrity of the paint finish. Working from behind the panel, trained technicians use specially designed tools to massage the metal back to its original shape.

The growth of the PDR industry has helped further advancements over the last few years in technique, training and tooling to enable more complex, difficult repairs to be performed. These include creases, body lines, hail damage and larger repairs. Many manufacturers, insurance companies and remarketing professionals see PDR as a highly acceptable repair method. Successful PDR programs have become more commonplace in many leading dealerships and they may be just right for you. ■

WHEN CHOOSING A VENDOR, CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS:

- Does the provider have liability insurance?
- What happens if a customer's vehicle is damaged?
- Is there a warranty on the repair work?
- Will this provider be around tomorrow?