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fights for a fairer dispensation





A fairer dispensation



Over the past two years the South African Motor Body Repairers' Association (SAMBRA), a proud association of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI), has been lobbying hard to eradicate any unfair business practices which are impacting negatively on member growth.

Richard Green, National Director of SAMBRA says with the industry still reeling from the impact of COVID-19, it is really positive that a great deal of progress has been made with partners, Lightstone, in levelling the playing field and creating a far fairer dispensation for members.

"SAMBRA has always been one of the strongest advocates for a free market strategy and has worked tirelessly with all of its commercial partners to ensure a sustainable trading environment," says Green. He says the EchoMBR scores which reflect customer satisfaction and are carried out routinely by Lightstone following every customer interaction, are a very key indicator for OEMs and Insurers and influence how

work is allocated. Green says for the past 18 months SAMBRA has been working closely with Lightstone to revise the way the survey has been structured. "Many of our members were being unduly negatively affected by the structure and nature of some of the questions and this needed to be urgently addressed with Lightstone and all the various stakeholders. A low score adversely affects work allocation, particularly with the large major Insurers," notes Green.

"As the research is such a key barometer in building best practice models and ensuring a fair allocation of work without any unintended bias, we are delighted that the questionnaire has been completely overhauled to ensure members are not disadvantaged in any way," says Green.

"Lightstone management applied their expertise in customer satisfaction research to develop a new survey that would provide Motor Body Repairers (MBRs) with a fair and appropriate outcome from client responses to the Lightstone EchoMBR questionnaire, without decreasing the

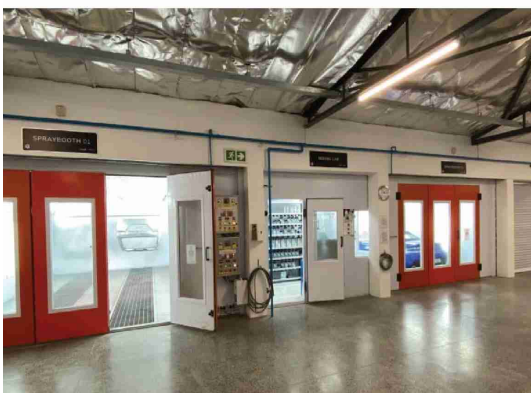
necessity for the delivery of excellent client service," says Bernard De Vantier, Lightstone Head of Projects and Research.

Removals and enhancements

Green says maintaining the integrity of the survey was absolutely key. Based on the research three of the questions which have either become redundant or were deemed unnecessary were removed. "It was important to have a shorter, more focused survey to reduce respondent fatigue.

In line with Lightstone's shared desire to ensure the survey "gets back to its roots" in service of the MBRs, the need to reduce the insurer focus within the survey was highlighted, not only to ensure an MBR focus is applied, but also to reduce respondent fatigue. The insurer questions are now reduced from five to just two.

A number of other questions were also carefully reviewed. Some were found to be unclear for example "Ready on time" could refer to whether the vehicle was ready for collection on



the day or ready on the day initially promised. This question did not take into account potential delays caused by insurer authorisation or parts supply issues, therefore would have penalised the MBR unfairly. Green says in cases like this the question was replaced with an entirely new one. In this case the new question is "Was the completed repair work explained to you after the repair?"

Questions relating to cleanliness, Consultant rating and opportunity to inspect were also revised to avoid any unfair penalisation and to allow the agent to probe further than simply a yes or no answer. "These insights are invaluable for improving customer service," says Green.

In total the insurer questions were reduced from six down to two, retaining the car hire question and in the MBR section, questions were reduced from 12 to eight questions.

Post interview review

One of the biggest changes in the survey will be that instead of only categorising the seven business area issues during the interview, the Lightstone agent will now utilise 25 categories and categorise the interview after terminating the call during the newly introduced interview review. At this time, the agent is also able to fast track escalations to the MBR should there be legal action threatened or the customer be particularly aggravated with the service. The agent is also able to simply fast track the interview through quality assurance, should there be any doubt about the information captured. These interviews are then reviewed before progressing to the MBR's reporting.

General Interview Enhancements

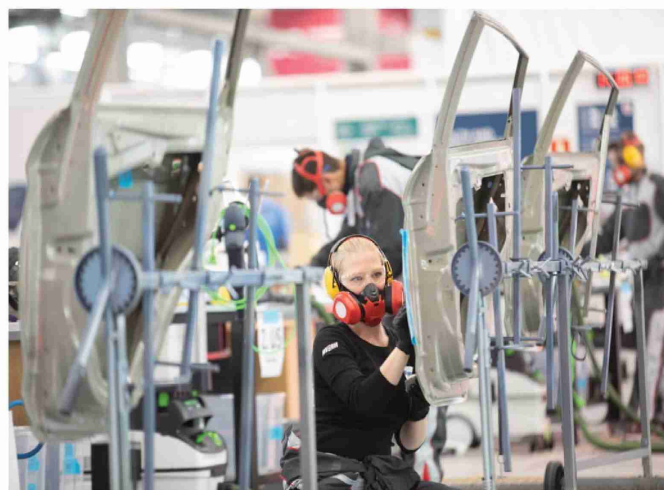
"The data and insights from the research can now better assist MBR in significantly improving their service ratings and response times," says Green.

The enhanced prompting will provide MBR with much more insightful feedback capturing motivations and sentiments and allowing a more focused response. "Expedited escalations at the end of the interview have been built in where the respondent is particularly irate or has threatened any form of legal action for example. This will be sent to the MBR the same day with the recording and all captured interview details for speedy recovery," notes De Vantier.

The new format also makes provision for additional oversight if an agent is not sure about anything. This improves objectivity and the overall integrity of the survey.

"We would like to sincerely thank Lightstone and all our industry partners for their insights and feedback to get us to this point. It has been an exciting journey and I feel we now have a much fairer system and a valuable business tool to help our industry thrive and improve overall service levels of excellence," concludes Green. **a**

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