

PROFIT MOTIVE: YOUR COMPASS TO FINANCIAL SUCCESS

Give customers a quick response

QR codes can offer an immediate connection to business information

BY TOM MCGEE | CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Just about everywhere you go today, you can probably find one of those funny-looking squares in an advertisement, on a vehicle wrap, on a product, on a business card or on social media business pages.

QR (short for “quick response”) codes are a type of barcode that can be scanned and read by smart phones. Once read by your phone, they will redirect you to a website, play a YouTube video, send a text message or provide directions via Google maps, among other tasks, depending on what the QR creator set up.

With the number of people that have smart phones today, a QR code can be a valuable tool in your collision repair business. If a QR code reader isn’t pre-installed on your smart phone, there are many QR code reader apps that are available for free or for a minimum cost. I use an iPhone, and I’ve installed a QR app reader on it.

If you see a QR code, just take out your smart phone and use any free app for scanning the QR codes like you would use your camera phone; it’s just like snapping a picture.

I also purchased a QR code generator app that allows me to make my own QR codes. The app was about \$10 and can generate QR codes in a variety of colors. The codes can:

- Imbed a company logo
- Make a phone call
- Send a text message

- Generate a map
- Provide contact information
- Create a calendar event
- Provide Wi-Fi network connection information
 - Generate a code that includes plain text
 - And perform other customized functions

You can also find plenty of websites that will allow you to create QR codes for free. You just need to provide the URL you want to send people to, the message you want to share, or whatever other information you’d like to put into the QR code.

Although I’ve seen QR codes used in email marketing, on websites and on Facebook business pages, QR codes are most useful in the physical world. This is because a QR code placed in a direct mail piece, on a pizza box or on a street sign allows the viewer to quickly connect to all types of information simply by scanning the QR code.

Here are a few examples of how a collision repair business can use QR codes:

- Short welcome video from the owner
- Map to your business
- Link to your appointment scheduler

- What to do following a collision
- Early-bird vehicle drop-off information
 - Links to follow you on social media sites
 - Promote a contest or community event
 - Describe your warranty information

There are also many ways that you can use a QR code in the shop for easy-to-access information such as vendor information, equipment maintenance information and training videos.

You can visit <http://www.atonline-training.com/abrn1309/> to see some examples of different uses and styles of QR codes. QR codes will continue to gain in popularity with the increased use of smart phones. They are easy and inexpensive to create, and easy for consumers to use. Consider using QR codes as another way to engage and communicate with both your future and current customers, drive traffic to your website and build your business. You are only limited by your imagination on how you want to take advantage of QR codes.

Tom McGee is Director of ATI Collision for the Automotive Training Institute, founded in 1974. ATI’s 108 associates train and coach more than 1,150 shop owners across North America to drive profits and dreams home to their families. You can contact Tom at tmcgee@auto-training.net and visit ATI’s website at www.autotraining.net. Check out “Profit Matters” for mechanical repair management tips in Motor Age by ATI’s CEO Chris “Chubby” Frederick. ☞

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