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ABP MOTORSPORT

Independent garage ABP Motorsport has seen its business flourish since changing its customer focus two years ago.

ABP Motorsport was established in 1964 by founder John Parton and as the name suggests initially concentrated on the performance side of the business.

However, two years ago, Chris Meredith - who has been with the company for 20 years - took over and changed its direction.

Since then the company, which is based in Shavington, near Crewe, has twice been named Garage of the Year by a leading national automotive business magazine.



Chris Meredith

Chris said: "A lot of time and effort went into entering the competition, but we have since reaped the benefits and have just enjoyed a record month in terms of the number of man hours sold, our highest number of MoTs and a record turnover."

Speaking about the change of business emphasis, he said: "The split used to be 80 percent performance and 20% 'standard' work; now it is 30% performance and 70% standard.

"We now focus primarily on general servicing, MoT and repair work and deal with all makes of vehicles, mainly up to the age of 10 years. We have a reputation of being the tidiest and most professional garage in the area and we have a good cross-section of customers, including many from the same families.

"We offer our customers a top quality and friendly service that they don't often get from the local main dealers and our good reputation is largely spread by word of mouth. We are not intimidating and try to make our customers' experience a pleasant one, which particularly appeals to our female customers.

PRESS RELEASE

“We have also attracted a lot of business from local main dealers and carry out work on under three-year-old cars that are still under the vehicle manufacturer’s warranty.”

Chris (37) is convinced that quality is key to running a successful independent garage.

He said: “We only fit quality products. Bad parts come back to haunt you. We use quality products and explain to our customers why we use them and why it is important we carry out work on their vehicles. Let’s face it if you take your car to be serviced you don’t really notice much difference when you collect it, that is why it is important to explain to the customer what work you have carried out, why you have done it and why you have used the parts.”

One company ABP Motorsport has had a long relationship with is NGK Spark Plugs (UK) Ltd which was named Supplier of the Year in the same magazine readers’ poll that saw ABP named Garage of the Year.

Chris said: “We have been using NGK products ever since I started here. We use their spark plugs, glow plugs and Lambda sensors. It really is a no-brainer. They are quality parts backed by top class marketing support.



“Quality brands like NGK help you succeed in business, because you can fit them confident in the knowledge that they will do the job they are intended for. There may be the odd performance car that uses different plugs, but in virtually every other case we fit NGK. We wouldn’t dream of using anything else. Also, even though we get the parts from our local motor factors, the NGK rep still comes in to see us to make sure we are happy with the service we are getting, which we are.”

Chris is a strong advocate of independent garages and is often quoted in the local Press on industry issues.

An RMI and Motor Codes member, he said: “What the industry needs is for bad garages to be made to join a Government supported national compulsory scheme. There are a number of current schemes which although laudable are voluntary and do nothing to deal with those garages at the bottom end of the market who give the industry a bad name.”

ABP Motorsport boasts four bays and employs seven full-time staff, including three technicians, and two part-timers at its immaculate village premises. Chris focuses primarily on running the business.

He said: “I am not a technician, I know how to do a lot of the jobs, but I concentrate on running the business. I think a lot of garages fail because they are run by people who are probably great technicians but they are not businessmen. They know how to fix a car, but they don't know how to make money.”

PRESS RELEASE



Chris - who is married with two children - has a diploma in business finance and is constantly looking at ways of improving his business. Later this year, he is planning to visit the SEMA Show in Las Vegas primarily to look for parts for the performance side of the business.

Certainly his efforts have proven successful and his company has been named North West regional winner and national finalist in the Motor Codes Golden Garages competition

and also received a 100% rating in a mystery shop carried out by Cheshire Trading Standards as part of its Golden Spanner scheme.

He said: "We were delighted with our mystery shop score, particularly as the highest dealer only scored 87% which proves we must be doing something right. Certainly we pride ourselves on supplying a quality service to the local community and will strive to continue to do so in the future."

For more information visit www.ngkntk.co.uk

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