

JACK LYONS' DRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE IS THE HEART OF THE SHOP'S SUCCESS



Jack Lyons writes an estimate for a repair.

For Jack Lyons, a boyhood passion for repairing cars has grown into one of the most successful body shops in North America. He's been repairing cars for more than fifty-five years, and while many things about the industry have changed, Jack's drive and determination to deliver top-notch repairs to his customers remains constant. It's a commitment that's recognized by his employees and customers, his community and by the collision repair industry.



"My philosophy has always been a simple one: build a better body shop, and the customers will come," says Lyons. Today, Lyons Auto Body repairs more than 300 cars a month. His reputation for excellence is known throughout the Toronto area, and Lyons Auto Body has been recognized with a Readers' Choice Award by the *Mississauga News* in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004 and 2005.

"As a boy, I always knew that I wanted to work on cars," says Lyons. He began working in a local garage after school when he was fourteen years old, then he went to work in a nearby body shop at sixteen, eager to learn the tricks of the trade in body repairs.



Lyons Auto Body opened in 1952, and Jack Lyons purchased the first tow truck in 1957. Over the years, the business has grown, along with the number of employees and the fleet of tow trucks. This photo was taken in 2001.

“My philosophy has always been a simple one: build a better body shop, and the customers will come,” says Jack Lyons, who’s been repairing cars for more than 55 years.

In 1952, at the age of 20, Jack Lyons started his repair business in an old chicken coop located in the backyard of his childhood home in a small town then known as Erindale. At first, he did all the repair work himself, concentrating on the bodywork during the normal workday, then painting at night after supper when the dust had settled.



Many employees have been with Lyons Auto Body for more than 30 years.

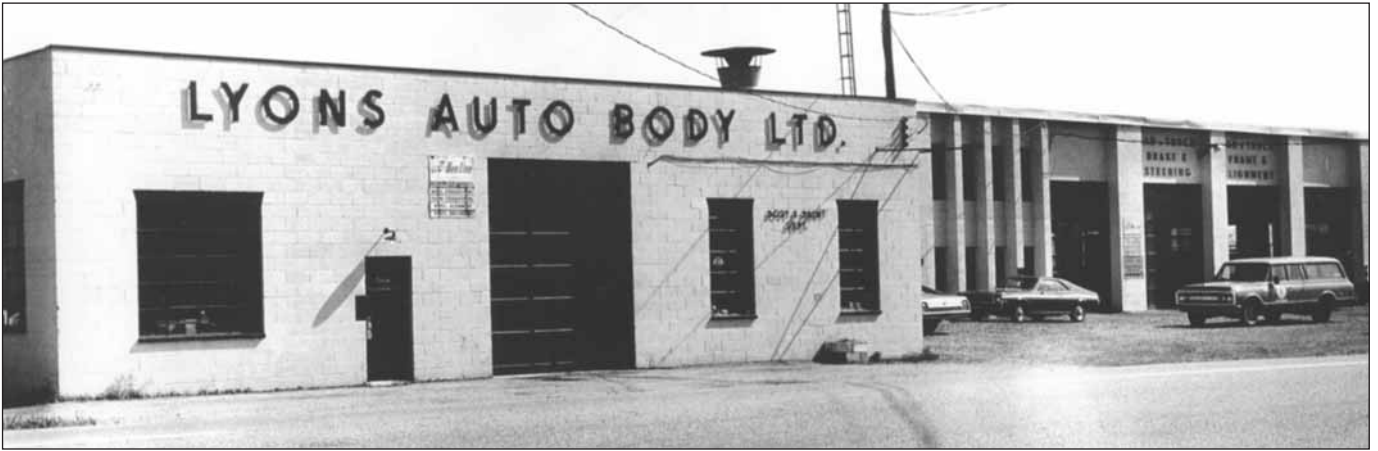
Expansion plans

By 1955, the business was ready to expand. Lyons purchased three acres in a sparsely populated, out-of-the-way spot, and opened his body shop. There were six employees working at the shop fronting on Burnhamthorpe Road, and a news article from the time says “the only neighbours were a few cows in the empty field.” In a good week, two or three repairs could be completed. Always looking ahead, Lyons purchased an additional three acres in 1959 for future expansion.

Attracting business turned out to be no problem for this determined young man with a growing reputation as a smart businessman. People came from miles around throughout southern Ontario, knowing they could depend on Jack Lyons for a quality repair and friendly, dependable service.

The small town grew to become Mississauga, a western suburb of Toronto. As the city grew, so did Jack Lyons’ business. By 1965, Lyons Auto Body had twenty employees and a growing fleet of tow trucks.

The original building has been expanded and enhanced several times over the years. It is now 40,000 square feet and employs more than one hundred. State-of-the-art equipment has always been a hallmark of Lyons Auto Body, and



When Jack Lyons moved his young business to its present location more than fifty years ago, the building was fronted by a little-traveled road and surrounded by hayfields. Today, the shop is in the middle of Mississauga, Canada's seventh largest city.

today you'll find Genesis 2 laser measuring technology, three down draft spray booths, and John Bean 3D Visualiner diagnosis and alignment technology to repair suspension damages.

All in the family

A love of the automotive business runs in the Lyons family, and Jack Lyons' children all grew up learning about cars and developing an appreciation for the business. His daughter Valerie Lyons-Sala is office manager and son John Lyons is general manager. Daughter Faye Lyons works for the Canadian Automotive Association as municipal affairs specialist, and frequently writes articles on industry issues. Daughter Mary Jo also worked in the business for many years.

Jack Lyons and his wife Julie have seven grandchildren, who range in age from one to seventeen. Weekends often find the younger Lyons hanging around with their grandfather in the shop.

Lyons believes the family-owned business is one of the largest of its kind in North America, offering many services including brakes, steering, wheel alignment and towing, collision assistance, handling insurance claims, impound lots, autobody repairs and paint jobs for all kinds of vehicles.

"We can handle any size vehicle, from a small car to a 50-ton crane," says Jack Lyons. All collision repairs receive a lifetime warranty for as long as the customer owns the vehicle.

Lyons' fleet of 35 late model wheel-lift tow trucks are a familiar sight in Mississauga. Each is radio dispatched and available for either short or long hauls. Lyons also has flatbed trucks for severely damaged vehicles or transporting classic cars. Tow trucks are on call 24/7, 365 days a year.

Setting high standards

Employees know that Lyons will accept nothing less than the best, and he insists that everyone set high standards for themselves.



"There is no such thing as a job that just 'turns out well,'" says Jack Lyons. "Jobs have good results because of the planning and effort that you put into it." All technicians are I-CAR Gold Class certified, and the company invests in training continuously.

Many Lyons employees have been with the firm more than 30 years, and a few have retired never having had a job other than at Lyons Auto Body. Employees are key to Lyons success. "Concentrate on giving the customer quality work,





treat your employees well, make sure they are well-trained and keep up with the times,” Lyons believes.

Lyons has always believed that one way to satisfy customers is to start with the finest materials. “That’s why we use Sikkens paint from Akzo Nobel. We feel that the quality is the best that there is,” said Lyons. “Akzo Nobel does an exceptional job in research and development, and it shows in the way that their products outperform others on the market.”

Keeping up with change

The last ten years have seen milestones in paint technology. “With today’s basecoats, we can achieve the same look in much less time and fewer steps than in the past,” says Lyons. “One of the greatest day-to-day challenges used to be achieving an acceptable refinish. Lacquer required multiple coats, repeated sanding, and polishing. Now, a beautiful refinish is much easier to achieve.”

Speaking about changes in the industry, Lyons recalls the days when customers were responsible for gathering three different repair estimates to submit to their insurance company. All that’s changed, now, with pre-established estimates and direct repair programs. Lyons estimates that 90% of his

dollar-volume is from insurance-paid work. He takes a practical view, and realizes that the industry must work together to provide high quality service.

“A satisfied customer will come back the next time and tell his friends and family. It’s really a partnership between Lyons, the insurance companies, our employees and the customer. We’re all working together to provide quality service.”

Looking ahead

Lyons Autobody remains committed to serving its customers with the highest quality repair at a fair price, while providing a challenging, rewarding environment for employees.

Jack Lyons reflects the confidence and optimism that you would expect from a proven leader. “We’ve never had a dissatisfied customer, and we’re determined to maintain our record. We feel there’s no shop in North America that does better work than Lyons Auto Body.”

Lyons offers these words of advice: “If there’s any secret for a successful business, it’s simply to love what you do, and insist on the very best effort from yourself and everyone around you.”

Profit



“There is no such thing as a job that just ‘turns out well,’” says Jack Lyons. “Jobs have good results because of the planning and effort that you put into it.”



(Top left) Valerie Lyons-Sala, Office Manager, Julie Lyons and Jack Lyons. (Bottom L-R) John Lyons, General Manager; Shawn Cormier, tow truck driver; Jim Simpson, Towing Manager with Rebecca Spencer, receptionist, assisting a customer.