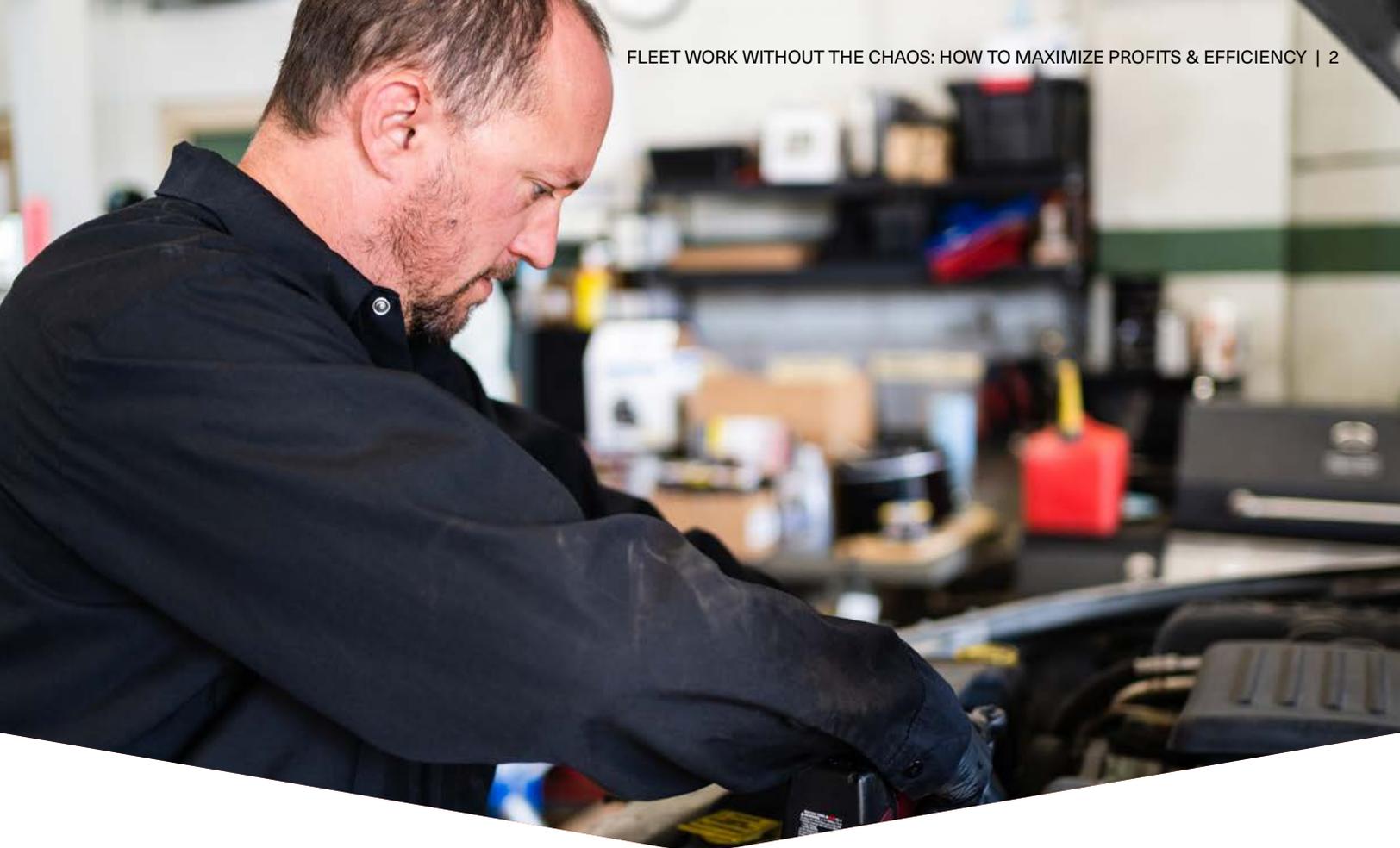




Fleet Work Without the Chaos: How to Maximize Profits & Efficiency



Turn Fleet Repairs into a Profitable, Scalable Part of Your Business

Handling fleet accounts can be challenging for independent auto repair shops. While some shops question whether fleet work is worth the effort, others appreciate the steady business and strong customer relationships it can build.

Fleet work isn't just about repairing vehicles. It's about creating long-term partnerships, managing larger repair orders, and ensuring companies keep their vehicles on the road. Without the right systems in place, handling multiple fleet jobs, meeting tight deadlines, and managing complex billing can become overwhelming.

This guide will help you navigate the complexities of fleet repair, from understanding unique challenges and implementing best practices to avoiding common mistakes and leveraging the right tools for success. You'll also discover real-world insights from shop owners and how Shop-Ware's fleet management features can help you simplify operations and boost profits.



Why Fleet Work is Different

Fleet accounts can range from small businesses with a handful of vehicles to large operations managed by fleet management companies. A fleet account is generally defined as any customer that operates multiple vehicles that require regular maintenance and repairs under a structured agreement. These accounts can include:

- **Local service businesses** (plumbing, HVAC, landscaping, pest control) with multiple vans or trucks.
- **Corporate fleets** (sales representatives, rental cars, delivery vehicles) that require ongoing maintenance.
- **Government and municipal fleets** (police cars, fire trucks, city maintenance vehicles) with strict compliance requirements.
- **Fleet management companies** that oversee large groups of vehicles and coordinate maintenance through third-party repair shops.
- **Rideshare and transportation services** (taxis, shuttle buses, ride-hailing services) that prioritize uptime and rapid service.



Each type of fleet account comes with different expectations, priorities, and challenges, requiring shops to tailor their approach based on the fleet's needs. The approach to fleet work can vary greatly depending on the type of accounts a shop handles. While fleet work can provide a consistent revenue stream, it also brings unique challenges:

Managing Multiple Repair Orders

Fleet customers often bring in several vehicles at once, meaning shops need to handle multiple repair orders simultaneously. Unlike retail customers who bring in one vehicle at a time, fleet clients expect fast, organized service with minimal downtime. Without a clear process, it's easy for details to be missed.

Prioritizing Fast Turnarounds

Fleet managers rely on their vehicles to keep their businesses running. When a fleet vehicle is out of service, it affects their bottom line. That means they expect shops to complete repairs quickly while maintaining high-quality work. The pressure to meet fast deadlines can add strain to your team if workflow efficiency isn't optimized.

Understanding Fleet Manager Priorities

Each fleet manager—and in some cases, fleet management company—has different concerns and levels of control over pricing and approvals. Some fleet shops set strict service terms, ensuring profitability, while others must **navigate additional fees imposed by third-party management firms**. Some prioritize cost control and predictable pricing, while others focus on minimizing downtime above all else. Taking the time to understand their needs—whether it's quicker approvals, detailed reports, or bulk invoicing—helps build stronger relationships and ensures long-term partnerships.



Fleet Payment Cards and Billing Structures

Some fleet accounts use **fleet payment cards** or third-party management firms that approve or deny repairs. While these systems help fleets track maintenance expenses, they often introduce delays, additional fees, and approval challenges for repair shops. If you work with fleet cards, it's important to account for processing fees and possible restrictions when setting up agreements.

Coordinating with Multiple Points of Contact

Fleet work often involves communication with multiple people—drivers, fleet managers, and accounting departments—all with different expectations. Poor communication can lead to delays, billing disputes, and unhappy customers. Shops need a system that ensures everyone is on the same page.

Navigating Complex Billing & Discounts

Fleet customers often have different pricing structures than regular clients. Some negotiate discounted rates, require bulk invoicing, or expect consolidated billing. Many independent shops offer a fleet rate—consistent pricing across all fleet vehicles—to simplify billing and stay competitive. Others use tiered labor rates for older vehicles, factoring in extra time for sourcing parts. Managing these pricing structures manually can lead to errors and inefficiencies.

Ensuring Profitability in Fleet Work

Fleet work can bring steady business, but it's not always profitable unless managed properly. That being said, fleet work does not have to mean lower profit margins. **In fact, when structured properly, fleet accounts can generate higher revenues than retail work.** Shops that focus on **efficiency, fast turnarounds, and clear pricing** can maximize profitability from fleet operations.

Best Practices for Independent Shops Handling Fleet Work

Managing fleet accounts successfully requires more than just taking on more repair orders. It's about creating efficient systems, ensuring profitability, and maintaining strong relationships with fleet managers. Below are proven strategies that independent repair shops use to keep fleet work organized, profitable, and stress-free.

Standardize Fleet Service Processes

Create a structured process for intake, approvals, and invoicing so that every fleet repair follows the same workflow. Use digital tools to log vehicle history, track upcoming maintenance, and document special agreements to eliminate guesswork.

Optimize Scheduling & Workflow

Experienced shop owners recommend prioritizing fleet drop-offs in the morning so service advisors can diagnose and estimate repairs early in the day. This speeds up approvals, ensuring parts are ordered quickly and work can begin without unnecessary delays.

Streamline Communication

Establish clear communication with fleet clients. Whether it's email, text updates, or a customer portal, make sure fleet managers and drivers receive timely updates on repair status, approvals, and invoices. **Understand what your fleet contacts want to hear about and when.** Many fleet customers opt out of traditional marketing communications but still expect service reminders and quality control check-ins and follow ups.

Automate Billing & Payments

Manual invoicing for fleet accounts can be time-consuming and prone to errors. Use software that supports batch payments, fleet customer profiles, and automated accounts receivable (A/R) reporting to simplify the process and avoid payment delays. Shop-Ware's Fleet A/R Reporting allows shops to view outstanding receivables and export PDF invoices for easy fleet client billing.





Track Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

A great way to measure fleet account success is by tracking **Gross Profit Per Hour (GPPH)**, a key profitability metric used by many top independent shops. Focusing on GPPH—rather than just volume or discounts—helps ensure fleet work remains profitable.

Other key fleet metrics include:

- Average repair turnaround time
- Common fleet repairs and trends
- Outstanding payments and cash flow impact
- **Fleet age, make, and model distribution**

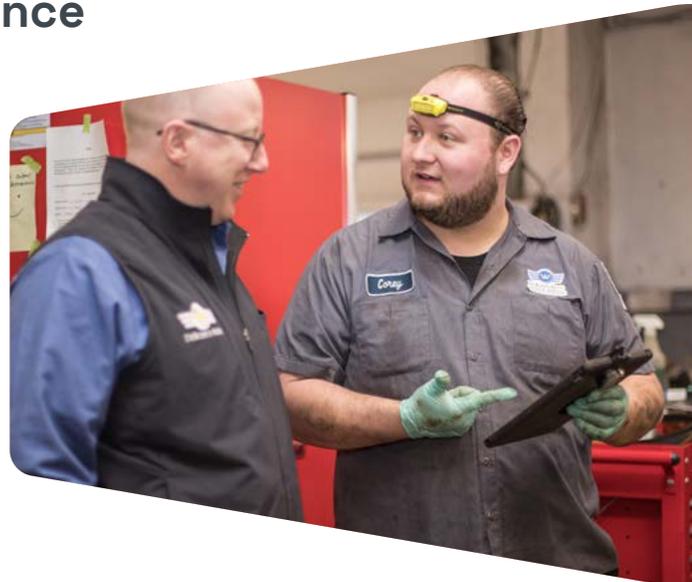
Common Mistakes in Fleet Management and How to Avoid Them

Even the most experienced repair shops can run into challenges when managing fleet accounts. Learning from common mistakes can help you refine your processes, increase efficiency, and avoid costly missteps. Below are some of the biggest mistakes shops make—and how to prevent them.

Underestimating the Importance of Written Agreements

Mistake: Relying on verbal agreements can lead to misunderstandings regarding pricing, warranties, and service expectations.

Solution: Always provide a comprehensive written proposal outlining prices for common services, warranties, towing provisions, inspection services, turnaround times, and any employee discounts. Guarantee these prices for at least one year to build trust and provide clarity.



Focusing Solely on Price Competitiveness

Mistake: Believing that offering the lowest price is the only way to attract fleet accounts.

Solution: Understand that fleet owners often prioritize quick turnarounds and quality repairs over the lowest price. Emphasize your shop's ability to minimize vehicle downtime and provide reliable service, which can be more valuable than cost savings.

Neglecting Efficiency Improvements

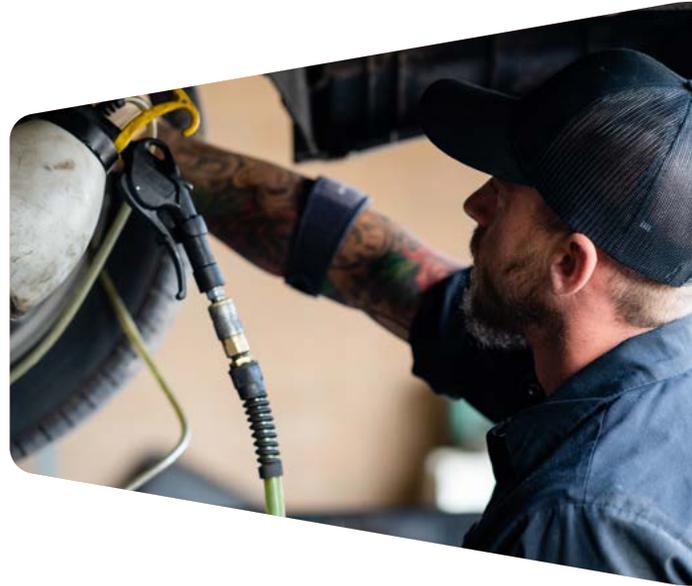
Mistake: Assuming that increased volume from fleet accounts will automatically lead to higher profits without adjusting shop processes.

Solution: Recognize that while profit margins on fleet accounts may be thinner, the pre-sold nature of services can improve efficiency. Streamline operations to handle the consistent workflow effectively, thereby increasing overall profitability.

Not Charging Late Payment Fees

Mistake: Extending credit without enforcing timely payments.

Solution: Implement **late payment fees** to discourage overdue balances. A standard **2% per month** late fee can help ensure you get paid on time and cover financing costs for outstanding invoices.



Proven Results: How Shops are Thriving with Shop-Ware

Shops using Shop-Ware have seen major improvements in handling fleet accounts, increasing profits, working more efficiently, and reducing admin work.

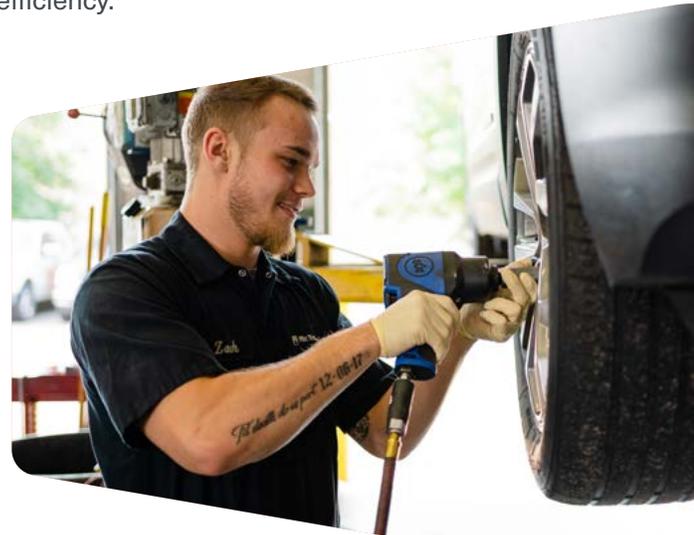
Mastering Fleet Management with Shop-Ware

Lucas Underwood, host of Changing the Industry and owner of L&N Performance Auto Repair in North Carolina, recently discussed fleet management challenges with Shop-Ware users Steve Schlaff owner of All Around Auto Care in Colorado, and Michael Hilzley, owner of Auto Safety Center in Wisconsin. They highlighted the importance of balancing fleet work with retail customers and how digital tools help improve efficiency.

One key takeaway was that fleet work can be structured in different ways—some shops use it as a supplement to retail repairs, while for others, fleet accounts are the primary profit driver. Many successful shops aim for 60-70% retail work and 30-40% fleet work to maintain profitability and stability.

The discussion also emphasized how Shop-Ware's analytics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) help shops optimize fleet operations, whether they handle local business fleets or large national accounts managed by fleet management companies. Gross Profit Per Hour (GPPH) was highlighted as a critical metric, helping shop owners measure fleet profitability and make necessary adjustments.

Using tools like Shop-Ware, independent repair shops can simplify fleet work and boost profits without adding extra stress. Shops can begin without unnecessary delays.



Using Data to Invest in the Right Tools

Brett Hunziker, owner of City Centre Automotive, shared how tracking fleet data helped his shop make smarter investments in tools and equipment. By analyzing the **most common makes and models serviced in their fleet accounts**, his team identified a significant number of Ford trucks needing specialized diagnostics. With this insight, they invested in **factory Ford scan tools**, allowing them to handle fleet repairs with the same level of efficiency as a dealership.

“We saw that most of our fleet work was Ford trucks, so it made sense to invest in the right tools. Now, we can service these vehicles faster, improve our accuracy, and increase fleet profitability while maintaining dealership-level capabilities,”

- Brett Hunziker, Owner of City Centre Automotive

Tracking fleet data isn't just about numbers—it's about **strategic business decisions that improve efficiency, reduce repair time, and enhance customer satisfaction**. Shops that leverage analytics like **fleet age, make, and model distribution** can make better choices when it comes to training, equipment purchases, and shop workflow optimization.



Shop-Ware Features for Managing Fleet Accounts

Shop-Ware offers a suite of features designed specifically to help independent shops manage fleet accounts efficiently. These include:

- **Fleet Customer Profiles** – Keep all fleet-specific information, including contact details, vehicle history, and custom labor rates in one easy-to-access location.
- **Fleet A/R Reporting** – Track outstanding invoices and export them as PDFs to simplify fleet billing and payment reconciliation.
- **PO# on Repair Orders** – Assign and track fleet-specific purchase order numbers for better record-keeping and streamlined communication with fleet managers.
- **Batch Payments** – Process multiple invoices at once to reduce admin time and ensure timely payments from fleet accounts.
- **Customizable Labor Rates** – Set up fleet-specific labor rates and pricing structures to maintain profitability while offering competitive fleet services.
- **Approval Contacts & Fleet Reporting** – Track who approved repairs and generate detailed reports for fleet clients.
- **Enhanced Workflow Visibility** – Monitor all fleet repair orders in real-time to ensure seamless operations and quick turnarounds.
- **Driver & Billing Contact Selection** – Assign specific drivers and billing contacts from a saved list for improved accuracy in communication and invoicing.
- **Approval Contacts** – This feature allows auto shops to request and track approvals from designated fleet representatives, ensuring accountability at every step. The system records who authorized each stage of the work, providing a clear audit trail for your records.
- **Fleet Reporting** - Generate comprehensive reports on fleet accounts, including service history, repair approvals, maintenance trends, and cost breakdowns.

With these features, independent repair shops can streamline fleet account management, reduce administrative burdens, and ensure a smooth, profitable workflow.





See How It Works for Your Shop

If you handle fleet accounts (or are thinking about adding them), Shop-Ware can help you manage them with ease. [Book a free demo today](#) and see how our platform simplifies fleet repair operations.

