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CANADA'S CAR CARE, REPAIR & MAINTENANCE B



ACADÉMIE
Jast auto



MAITRE FORGUEUR

VAST-AUTO

POISED FOR THE FUTURE

Groupe Del Vasto reviewed the turbulent events of the past twelve months at their recent Virtual Annual Conference. They also took stock of the many challenges they will face in the foreseeable future.

TEXT MICHEL BEAUNOYER

In the wake of the pandemic and the subsequent fallout from its effects on the automotive aftermarket, Steve Bujold, Eastern Canada Sales Director for Vast-Auto Distribution, points out just how well the network has fared during this challenging period. "Our network has come out of this ordeal stronger than ever. We have continued to grow organically, as the repair shops in our various banner programs have been extremely busy. In addition to the growth within the network, the organization continued to look for opportunities to strengthen its presence in the Eastern Canadian market."

Among other initiatives, he mentions the acquisition of the two J.P. Côté parts stores on the South Shore of Montreal and the three Canadian Auto Parts Suppliers (CAPS) locations in the Ottawa area. "We continue to develop solutions for our network to address the challenges arising from the volatility of parts availability, including the implementation of business intelligence-based solutions. In addition, we are actively working to help our clients with the challenges caused by workforce constraints, a situation that affects the industry as a whole," explains Bujold. >

Wilson Almeida, pictured here in front of the Vast-Auto Academy, is the driving force behind the network's training program.



For Vast-Auto, training is essential in order to advance technical knowledge throughout the entire network.

Shot in the arm

“Auto Value Certified Service Centres, Auto Mecano, OCTO Auto Service Plus, Monsieur Transmission and Mister Muffler franchises remained busy during this period, although the type of repairs changed,” points out Bujold. “We’ve seen a significant increase in the number of seized-up brakes or dead batteries from vehicles that haven’t been driven for long periods. Remote working has led to a shift in the type of repairs to be performed. The resumption of business, and the fact that motorists want to keep their vehicles longer, combined with limited availability of new and used vehicles, will also have a positive effect on the volume of work in these repair facilities.”

The future is now

While it is important to review the highlights of the past year, looking at the initiatives in place for the future success of the organization is a top priority. In this respect, the Vast-Auto Virtual Conference was an opportunity for the organization to promote the resources and tools it has deployed to help their repair shop network succeed going forward.

“We have upgraded our digital communication tools, most notably between the repair shop network and their retail customers, when purchasing tires online. This shared platform also allows customers to make appointments online or to manage comments on social networks. Although it’s not immediately apparent, this initiative has broader implications over the long term,” says Bujold.

The market shift to electric vehicles is another issue that the network is taking seriously, notably in developing the EV VAST project. “Just as everything is in place to ensure that shops

have access to parts inventory specific to electric vehicles, repair shops will also be supported in making this transition. In addition to the Compétences VÉ electric vehicle repair training program, in which we are committed partners, Vast-Auto is also setting up a specific training program for the technicians in its network to bring them up to speed. The time to train our teams is now. While electric vehicles only represent 2.5% of the overall vehicle fleet, this number is set to rise quickly,” Bujold explains. “We must be ready to demonstrate our know-how to our customers.” In this regard, the Vast-Auto Academy, headed by Wilson Almeida, is central to the network’s core values.

According to Bujold, it is essential that all industry stakeholders be given the necessary training, whether they are parts or service advisors, representatives, technicians or managers.

Furthermore, in order to help repair shops find the talent required for this transition, and for the overall sustainability of their activities, a “careers” page has been added to the websites of each of the banner programs in collaboration with human resources specialist partnerships.

Parts store and repair shop winners

The Conference was also an opportunity to highlight the excellence of the network’s parts stores and repair shop partners. The repair shop network nominees were submitted by the parts stores with which they have developed a close business relationship over the years. The selection committee then analyzes a series of quality criteria.

“I am especially proud of this year’s winners,” declared Bujold. “Our network has shown resilience. These stores and shops have demonstrated the ability to adapt to an extremely challenging situation. This is truly remarkable!” 🌐

THE STORES AND SHOPS THAT EXCELLED IN 2021



- 1 Martin Boulet, from Distribution BAMM, was awarded the Auto Value Parts Store of the Year award for Quebec, which was delivered by Pierre de Blois from Vast-Auto.
- 2 Robin's Auto Parts was recognized as the Auto Value Parts Store of the Year for Ontario.
- 3 Atlantic Auto Parts Resource was named Atlantic Canada's Auto Value Parts Store of the Year for 2021.
- 4 DG Mécanique et Pneus was the recipient of the Auto Value Certified Service Centre of the Year award, represented by Christian Tremblay, Daniel Girard, France St-Arneauld and James Desjardins.
- 5 The Auto Mecano Shop of the Year award went to Garage JP Monette, represented by Sébastien Roy and Francis Monette.
- 6 Paul Tremblay, from Mevotech, received the Representative of the Year award, from the hands of Pierre de Blois from Vast-Auto.
- 7 The company Armature DNS, represented by Roberto Bagorda, was recognized as vendor Partner of the Year. The award was delivered by Nelson Estrela of Vast-Auto.
- 8 Silencieux Corbeil, represented by Dominique Corbeil and Jonathan Dubois, were the recipients of the OCTO Shop of the Year award.