CHAFFEY COLLEGE | BACCALAUREATE DEGREE PROGRAM

BA in Automotive Technology

Employer Survey Results — Summary Report

Prepared for the BDP Workgroup • Survey fielded May 11–28, 2026 • Report date: July 6, 2026

Executive Summary

Eight regional automotive employers — five manufacturer representatives and three dealership managers — completed the Automotive Technology BDP employer survey between May 11 and May 28, 2026. One additional submission was blank and is excluded from all counts. Despite the modest sample, the signal is consistent and directly usable as evidence of employer demand in the CCCCO application (Q8–Q11).

- **Unanimous hiring signal.** All eight respondents said the bachelor's degree would influence hiring — seven "yes (somewhat)" and one "yes (strongly)."
- **Clear wage premium.** Every respondent expects graduates to earn more: three project $3–5/hr, three project $6–10/hr, one projects $10+/hr, and one expects movement to salaried roles.
- **EV and diagnostics roles are the hiring pain points.** EV/hybrid specialists and advanced diagnostic technicians were each named hardest-to-hire by five of eight respondents.
- **Leadership is the #1 skills gap.** Leadership/supervision was cited by six of eight respondents — more than any technical skill — followed by customer communication and shop workflow efficiency (four each).
- **Business, legal, and operations content rated at parity with advanced technical content.** Three of the four top-rated topics are non-technical (Service Department Operations, California BAR Regulations, Ethics in Service & Sales), reinforcing employer feedback that the upper division should add the "ancillary" professional layer technicians rarely receive.
- **Two letter-of-support commitments in hand** (one manufacturer field technical specialist; one dealership service manager who provided direct contact information), plus a third general statement of support.

Respondent Profile

ID	Organization	Role	Size	Degree influences hiring?
R1	Manufacturer	Technical Specialist	100+	Yes (somewhat)
R2	Manufacturer	Technical Specialist	—	Yes (somewhat)
R3	Manufacturer	Field Technical Specialist	100+	**Yes (strongly)**
R4	Manufacturer	Foreman	11–25	Yes (somewhat)

ID	Organization	Role	Size	Degree influences hiring?
R5	Manufacturer	Field Technical Specialist	100+	Yes (somewhat)
R6	Dealership	Manager	51–100	Yes (somewhat)
R7	Dealership	Manager	100+	Yes (somewhat)
R8	Dealership	Manager	26–50	Yes (somewhat)

Key Findings

1. Hardest-to-Hire Roles (select up to 3)

Role	Mentions	% of 8
EV / hybrid specialist	**5**	63%
Advanced diagnostic technician	**5**	63%
Service Advisor (high-performing)	4	50%
Shop foreman / team lead	3	38%
Service manager	2	25%
Parts manager / transmission specialist / telematics & pre-collision (1 each)	1	13%

2. Skills Most Lacking in the Current Workforce (select up to 5)

Skill	Mentions	% of 8
Leadership / supervision	**6**	75%
Customer communication / sales	4	50%
Shop workflow efficiency	4	50%
Analytical thinking	3	38%
Business / financial knowledge	3	38%
Electrical / network diagnostics	3	38%
Advanced troubleshooting strategy	3	38%
Communication / problem-solving / compliance knowledge / EV systems / work ethic	1–2	13–25%

3. Expected Wage Increase upon Degree Completion

Response	Count	% of 8
$3–5 per hour	3	38%
$6–10 per hour	3	38%

Response	Count	% of 8
$10+ per hour	1	13%
Movement to salaried position	1	13%

Application relevance: 100% of respondents project a wage premium for graduates and 100% say the degree would influence hiring.

Course Topic Priorities

Respondents rated 48 candidate topics across five survey sections as High, Medium, Low, or Not Needed. The Priority Score below averages responses on a 0–3 scale (High = 3).

Top-Rated Topics (Priority Score ≥ 2.50)

Topic	Survey Section	% High	Score
Service Department Operations	Dealership Ops / Fixed Ops	75%	**2.75**
BAR Regulations (California)	Legal / Industry / Policy	75%	**2.75**
Ethics in Automotive Service & Sales	Industry Context / Strategy	75%	**2.75**
Advanced Automotive Diagnostics Strategy	Advanced Technical	75%	**2.63**
Leadership & Team Development	Business & Management*	63%	2.63
Automotive Law & Compliance	Legal / Industry / Policy	63%	2.63
Warranty & Consumer Protection Law	Legal / Industry / Policy	63%	2.63
OSHA Compliance & Workplace Safety Mgmt	Legal / Industry / Policy	63%	2.63
CAN Bus & Vehicle Networks	Advanced Technical	71%	2.57
EV Battery Systems & Diagnostics	Advanced Technical	63%	2.50
High Voltage Safety & Standards	Advanced Technical	63%	2.50
Technician Retention Strategies	Business & Management*	63%	2.50
Liability, Risk Mgmt & Shop Legal Exposure	Legal / Industry / Policy	50%	2.50

** The survey form labeled this section "Service Operations & Predictive Maintenance," but its items are business and management topics (financial management, leadership, retention, ownership); it is relabeled here for clarity.*

What the Ratings Say

The strongest pattern is the balance between the two halves of the proposed degree. Advanced technical topics — diagnostics strategy, CAN bus networks, EV battery systems, high-voltage safety — score exactly where the labor-market case predicted. But legal, compliance, operations, and leadership topics rate just as highly, and several verbatim comments argue that this professional layer is precisely what belongs in the upper division because it cannot be learned "on the job." Lower-rated topics cluster at the industry-history and marketing end (History of the Global Automotive Industry, Automotive Marketing Strategy, F&I Fundamentals), suggesting these fit better as electives, if at all.

Curriculum Design Implications

- **Anchor the upper division on a dual spine:** advanced diagnostics/EV systems on the technical side, and service-operations leadership, business, and legal/compliance content on the professional side. Employers rated both at the top and named leadership the single largest workforce gap.
- **Add applied professional writing.** Three separate respondents independently asked for automotive-focused English/writing — repair-order documentation quality, grammar, and written communication — one suggesting a discipline-geared writing course. This aligns naturally with the required 9+ units of upper-division GE.

- **Include a California-specific regulatory thread:** BAR regulations, warranty and consumer-protection law (Lemon Law was named explicitly), CARB/environmental rules, and OSHA workplace safety.
- **Design for working technicians.** One dealership manager urged a modular, evening/short-block format so incumbent workers can advance without leaving the job, with pathway options across Service, Parts, Sales, and F&I. This echoes the equity-minded admissions language already drafted in the application template.
- **Position diagnostics-only content carefully.** Two respondents saw hands-on diagnosis as lower-division or on-the-job territory, arguing the bachelor's tier should add what shops cannot teach. Certificates/electives named: smog, ASM training, advanced drivability diagnostics.
- **Noted but out of scope:** collision/body-shop operations was raised twice; worth acknowledging in advisory-committee minutes even if it stays outside the program boundary. Internships were requested as a value-add.

Employer Voices

> *"The upper-division courses should be geared more towards the ancillary portion of the automotive industry that most Technicians/Service Advisors do not consider important... such as writing skills and legal."*
>
> **Field Technical Specialist, Manufacturer**

> *"Teaching management skills to technicians. Most are on a trial-and-error basis when they go into a new position with no idea on how to manage a large group."*
>
> **Field Technical Specialist, Manufacturer**

> *"If it was modular so that someone that is in the industry already... can take classes at night or take short pieces of time off for in-classroom training, then back on the job."*
>
> **Service Manager, Dealership**

> *"Hopefully this can be something that starts leading to lifelong employees at a dealership or repair facility."*
>
> **Field Technical Specialist, Manufacturer**

Method & Data Notes

- Instrument: online survey with two profile questions, two multi-select questions, five rating grids (48 topics; High/Medium/Low/Not Needed, with an optional "hiring value" sub-response some respondents used), six open-ended questions, and two single-select outcome questions.
- n = 8 valid responses (5 manufacturer, 3 dealership). A ninth submission contained no answers and is excluded. Some respondents skipped individual grid items; per-topic response counts are shown in the workbook.
- All verbatim quotes are reproduced exactly as written, including original phrasing.