

# **ChipsAway and Womanic empower women to have more confidence when dealing with all things automotive**

Submitted by: Franchise Brands Ltd

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Live online Q&A 12pm-2pm, 8th March 2019

According to the Institute of Motor Industry (IMI), the automotive industry is currently running at a ratio of 10:2 males to females, which is a staggering gender imbalance. This could also be the reason why many women lack confidence when dealing with automotive issues and leave car maintenance and repair to their male counterparts.

With this in mind, and to help celebrate International Women's Day – 8th March 2019, leading minor automotive paintwork repair specialists ChipsAway, and the first UK all-women run garage repair and servicing facility, Womanic, have joined forces and will be hosting a live Q&A event on the day. The aim is to encourage females across the country to not only have the confidence to deal with the automotive trade, but also inspire more women to get into the industry and help start to address the gender inequality issue. The Q&A is for women up and down the country to ask whatever they want and glean as much information as they can, to empower them when it comes to dealing with anything related to the automotive industry.

Founder of Womanic, Louise Baker, has been in the automotive trade – repairing and servicing cars, nearly all her working life. But it was after having her daughter in 2014 that she decided she wanted a better life for her and her daughter, and wanted to prove she could do anything she set her mind to. The name 'Womanic' came to her in a dream, and the rest as they say, is history. Louise hasn't had a 'quiet' week since, yet is able to work around her daughter – being there for the school run and also able to occasionally finish early to spend quality time with her daughter.

"Working for myself is one of the best things about my job, so I can plan around my daughter. That and the fact I love what I do!" comments Louise.

Likewise, Caroline Clennell, one of ChipsAway's specialists who owns and runs the car paintwork repair business covering Stroud and Cirencester, knew ChipsAway was right from the off!

"I wanted to be able to run my own business, but in a field I love. I have always been mad about cars and I previously worked as a studio artist, so I knew I had some practical skills. It seemed a no-brainer.

"I still love fixing cars - every day is a different challenge. The biggest thrill is how happy people are with the work I have done. Nothing beats that "wow" from a customer when you hand back their pride and joy at the end of the day. Sometimes they ask me to thank my husband for his hard work and I love their reaction when I tell them it was actually me that carried out the repair!" enthuses Caroline.

Talking about their experiences of working in a male-dominated industry, Louise comments, "Years ago it was more difficult, but I've built up a reputation now and I'm well-known on the car scene, so that helps. I love working with men and women, and really would urge female customers to have

more confidence when it comes to dealing with automotive issues.”

Caroline sees it as an opportunity. “I feel I can really make an impact on the sector and stand out for being different. I am hugely inspired by Mary Portas and her book ‘Work Like a Woman’. She is an amazing business woman, who has excelled in a male-dominated environment.”

Both Louise and Caroline couldn’t agree more that ‘knowledge is power’, advising anyone who might be a little unsure of dealing with traditional garages and bodyshops, or even tackling it themselves, to ‘swat up’ beforehand.

“You don’t need to be in the trade to know what you’re talking about. Get to know your car, what sounds it makes, maintain it. You’d be surprised what you can learn and what tools are available to help you.” Says Louise.

Caroline’s advice is also to learn some basics; “Understand what a bumper is (and that it is usually made of plastic); and where to find a quarter panel and wing on your car. The "off-side" of your car is the driver’s side and the "near-side" is where the passenger sits. Simply knowing how to describe where the damage is on a car, using the right terminology, will make any technician think you know a bit more about your car. I have heard of bodyshops quoting women twice what men are charged - I am sure it is because there is a perception that we don’t know as much, but this simply shouldn’t be the case.”

So, if you’re a woman who feels intimidated when it comes to sorting out car issues, or puts off visiting a garage because you are worried you will be ripped off, fear not! Do your research, find out what you’re talking about and this will give you the confidence you need.

Likewise, if you’ve always loved cars, and the idea of turning this passion into a business really appeals, don’t be put off simply because you’re female. Follow Louise and Caroline’s lead and do your bit to help change the automotive industry into a better, more-inclusive environment, where women and men are seen as the equals they should be!

So, make sure you log in this Friday lunchtime between 12-2pm and ask Louise and Caroline your burning questions! Simply message them via the ChipsAway Facebook or Instagram profiles, and they will be more than happy to respond.

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For further information please contact Rebecca de Chair – [rebecca@franchisebrands.co.uk](mailto:rebecca@franchisebrands.co.uk) or 07376 386924.