



**CAPRICORN**  
*...it's just easier!™*

**Other resources in step 9i:**

- **No other resources**

### **Fees for special tools and data are part of the diagnostic future**

For a workshop to compete in today's market, it must be efficient and all jobs must run smoothly, especially the more challenging jobs that are becoming all too frequent.

It probably goes without saying, but top priority is to have good, reliable and well trained staff. Regrettably, they are getting harder to find because skill levels are being forced upwards to meet the level of technology found in the modern car.

This priority is closely followed by two others – good quality equipment and credible information. Neither of these comes easily or cheap.

Most aftermarket workshops are now charging some sort of scan tool or equipment fee as a way to recoup the large expense of buying the tools and updating them regularly is used, all workshops should be in a position to update or expand the equipment cabinet, including more scan tools.

Workshops are finding out that there's no such thing as 'one size fits all' when it comes to scan tools, unless the workshop specialises in one particular car model in which case the factory tool or aftermarket equivalent may suffice.

So the value of applying a realistic scan tool or special equipment fee cannot be under stated if a workshop wants to keep up to date with tools that seem to change from one generation to the next. And for those who still feel nervous about applying a fee for special tools, next time your local doctor sends you to a clinic for an X-ray or scan, don't expect those charges to be included in your GP bill.

The need for information and vehicle data is growing almost daily. With general electrical and electronic diagnostics becoming a larger part of a normal workshop's workload, the availability of good accurate vehicle data and information is becoming essential to get the job done. But good information and data isn't free.

If workshops applied the rationale of the scan tool fee to data or information purchase, another big workshop expense would be adequately covered by the vehicles that required the data.

What is the difference between adding a data charge to a bill, and charging for motor oil and an oil filter on a service invoice.

When undertaking diagnostic work, vehicle data and information should be treated like a spare part.

Selling your customers on the concept of data or information fees is very different to selling them the spare part needed for the repair. The data fee has to be sold at the beginning of the diagnostic process, not just plonked on the bill without warning at the end.

Right at the beginning, when the customer is being informed that diagnostic work will be required, requiring acquisition of data or information, they must be told that this data is like a spare part and will come at a cost.

The fees to be charged must be determined by the individual workshop, but as a guide, a sliding scale from \$10 to \$45 is quite common. Workshops need some flexibility because some data is harder to find than others.

You must make it clear to the customer that this information and data will save time, and therefore a technician's labour charge could be lower than otherwise. The other benefit is that data will help make the diagnosis as accurate as possible.

When the job is done, the information or data you had to find to make the repair must be presented to the customer with the invoice. This small gesture validates the purchase of data for the customer, and leaves him or her with the perception that they have received full value for money in the process.

The application of scan tool, special equipment, data or information fees must be carried out with confidence and honesty right at the beginning of the job.

Properly applied, the customer will accept that these fees are essential to the diagnostic process, and the workshop will find itself far better off with funds that can be directed to better equipment, more training and, as a by-product, more profit.

The place to start is [www.tatbiz.net.au/capricorn](http://www.tatbiz.net.au/capricorn)

*Just go for it*