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Why Choose a Converter by Application?

Let's roll back the clock. It's 1990 and you are a successful repair shop owner doing general repairs. As an independent, you have trained yourself and your staff to deal with many different repair issues. You have grown and adapted to changes in suspensions, brake systems, fuel and ignition systems and even tire technology, all in just over 20 years. Now you find yourself entering a different world, it's the dawning of the "computer age". Your tool guy is trying to sell you some sort of new fangled machine that will talk to the cars and tell you why that annoying yellow light keeps popping up in the instrument cluster. This is all well and good but nobody in your shop knows how to use it. The older techs run away while the younger guys smell blood in the water. They will learn but now they want more money!!! You feel like things are spinning out of control. It seems the more you wait the further you fall behind. Then you are faced with the ultimate question...do I adapt as I have in the past or get out while I still have my sanity?

For those who decided to stick around they have found it to be a wild ride. In the time passed since those early '90s we have witnessed technology in the automotive field evolving so fast that it made the previous 20 years look like we were moving in slow motion. Computer technology has found its way into every system, including the exhaust. What, you say, how could that be?

On January 1, 2009, CARB came out with new rules concerning the manufacture, sale and installation of new aftermarket converters in the state of California. In doing so they effectively changed the face of the exhaust world. To clarify however, all they really did was recognize and turn into law conditions that already existed not only in California but in most markets across the country.

The On Board Diagnostic system (OBD) is now monitoring the exhaust and alerting the car owner when there is a problem with the Catalytic Converter. At the same time the OEM's are being required to meet more stringent emission standards. It is quickly becoming very evident that the "one size fits all" converter will soon become a dinosaur. California Air Resource Board (CARB) certified vehicles have been and continue to be sold from coast to coast. These vehicles meet higher emission standards and contain advanced emission systems. Technicians everywhere are learning that being "application specific" when choosing a converter is a necessity not a luxury.

The California legislation requires that aftermarket converters be warranted for 50K miles and be OBD II compatible. They had recognized an issue of coexistence between the converters being used and the OBD systems that were monitoring them. In order to meet the tighter emission standards, vehicle manufactures were using advanced technology to more closely monitor the converters activity which put these components under the microscope. Converter efficiency and oxygen storage capacity (OSC) were the objects of this close scrutiny.

The sophistication of the current fleet of vehicles requires that we now use not only year, make and model but also Engine Family Number (EFN) to classify our line of converters. Building a "vehicle specific" converter not only assures our customers of getting the right product for their car but also gives us a platform to continue to stay current with new technology and be prepared for any changes to come.

The exhaust industry is at that decision point we spoke of earlier. It's now 20 years later, the situation is changing rapidly. Do you jump off... or hang-on, make some changes and prepare for a wild ride? Few people embrace change. It goes against every fiber of our being. That being said, we find ourselves in changing environments everyday. This industry is changing with the times and if we want to stay in business while remaining profitable and more importantly be here tomorrow we must adapt.

Magnaflow has always been a leader in the industry and when ARB decided it was necessary to change the rules, we took a pro-active role. We held seminars statewide in December of '08 and continued to educate Reps, Distributors and Installers nationwide throughout this past year. Not just on the new regulations but on what needed to be done to succeed. We are committed to this role and urge all of our customers to allow us to help you become part of the solution.

Cleaning up the environment...one converter at a time

Gary

