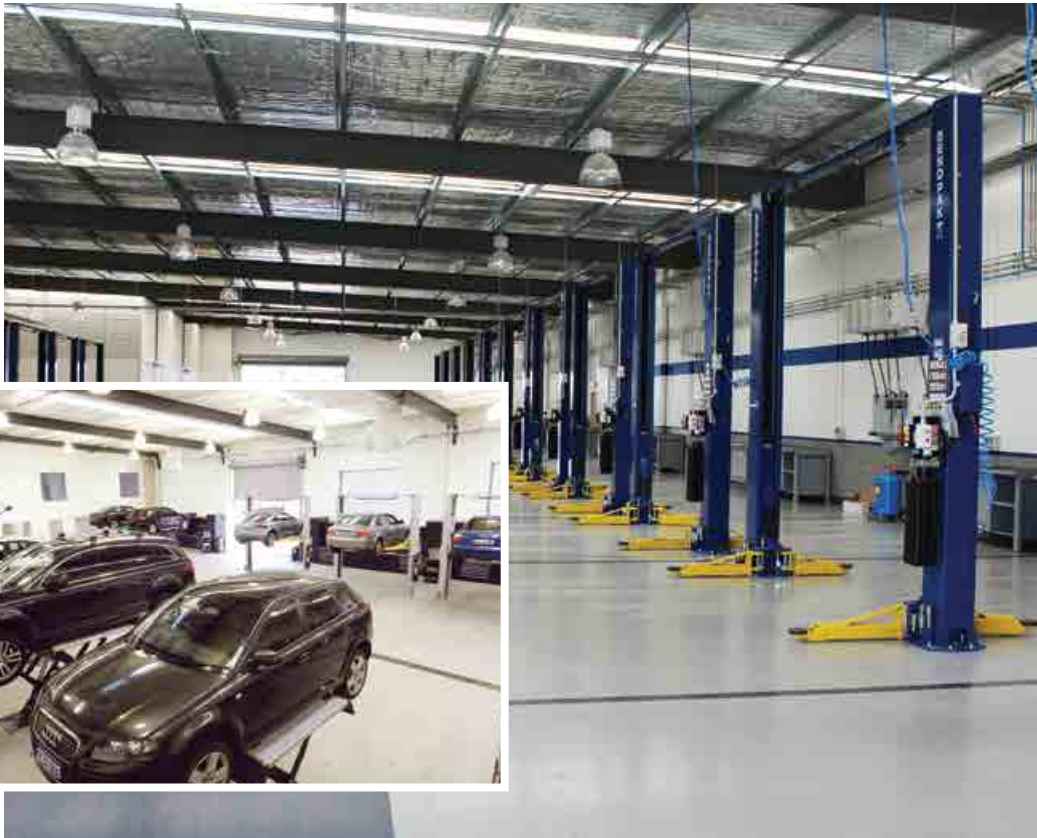


How to plan a successful workshop fitout

***Everything you need to know to ensure a smarter
workshop design***

When you set out to design a new auto workshop fitout, you'll want to include the best practice standards for every area, right from the start.





Whether your workshop is in need of a refurbishment, an expansion, or a complete new fitout, the key to a successful (and profitable) end result is planning.

You'll need a workshop design that:

- Allows the maximum vehicle throughput
- Enhances workflow efficiency
- Meets all workplace health and safety regulations
- Complies with all Australian standards
- Meets your OEM's Corporate Identity standards
- Impacts on the environment as little as possible
- ...all while meeting your budget and deadlines. Easy!

It's a lot to get your head around. And as a busy Fixed Operations Manager or Workshop Service Manager, you'll no doubt want to be as hands-on as possible during the all-important design phase. After all, no one knows your customers, your business, and your Dealer Principal like you do.

Yet with your day-to-day responsibilities for your dealership, you can't simply drop everything to devote the necessary time to planning and managing a new workshop fitout. So how do you make sure your new workshop fitout will meet your business's needs, now and for years to come?

Plan for a more profitable workshop fitout

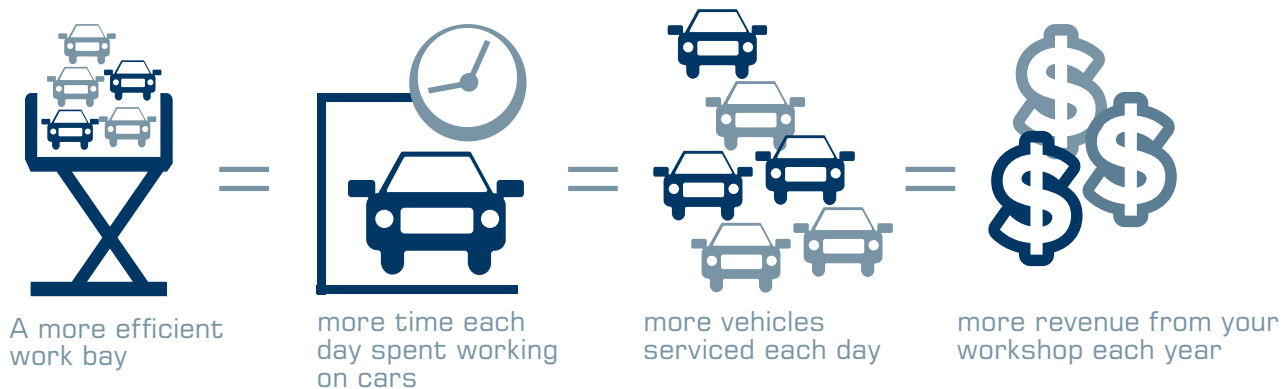
To give you a head start on your workshop planning process, we've put together this comprehensive workshop fitout guide.

We'll share some of the key considerations of good workshop design, and show you how with a little forethought and planning, you can make the process as smooth as possible – and ensure the best return from your investment.

Read on to discover five top ideas to keep in mind when planning your new workshop fitout.

1 Plan for the maximum vehicle throughput from the start

It's a pretty simple formula when you stop to think about it.



But while it's easy to say, it's a little more complicated to put in place. Exactly how do you design your work bays for the maximum efficiency?

Once again, it's all about balance. You need to ensure that technicians have easy access to the tools and resources they need – but of course, you can't afford to overcapitalise either.

One of the first principles is having everything your technicians need, right there at their fingertips. That means oil reels, air hoses, water, basins, and waste bins all need to be within easy reach – and not shared between too many technicians.

To design the most efficient workshop bay layout, take the time to think about:

Quick access for vehicles

For the most efficient workshop, you'll want to get the maximum number of cars in and out of each bay, every day. That means taking care of the little things that add up big time over the weeks and years.

Ideally, your technicians should be able to drive vehicles into the bay with just one turn – not a three or four point turn.

And then of course, straight off the lift and out for a test drive, before the next vehicle arrives ready to be serviced.

Access to oil reels, compressed air, waste bins, etc

The perfect bay setup isn't just a matter of installing every imaginable resource in every bay. You should think about your technicians' daily workflow, and how they use their tools.

For example, oil reels can be shared between technicians – but for the greatest efficiency, we recommend installing one oil reel between every two workshop bays, instead of compromising on one between every three. The increased cost will be more than made up over the first weeks of more efficient running.

On the other hand, compressed air is a vital tool that every tech needs to have on hand at all times to avoid wasting time. So installing one compressed air reel for each bay makes sense.

Similarly, time spent walking between work bays and waste bins is time wasted. Plan to install a shared waste bin between each pair of bays for the most efficient setup – and you'll keep your workshop clean, safe and tidy as well.

Plan for a large enough oil tank

Installing an oil tank for your workshop is a no-brainer, right? You simply install it in an oil store, fill it up when it's near empty, and never give it a second thought.

But when you do think about your workflow, it becomes obvious that having an under-sized tank can cause big problems.

Having a smaller tank means needing an oil delivery more often. And more regular oil deliveries mean having an oil truck taking up valuable space in your workshop on more working days – interfering with your work bay efficiency for longer.

Instead, think about installing a larger oil tank right from the start, and you can plan around having oil delivered just once a month instead of every fortnight.

Immediate access to all tools

That brings us to the 'big daddy' of work bay design principles – where do you store the actual tools which your technicians will use every day, to deliver a great service to your paying customers?

Of course, it's not a good idea (or a good look) to have your staff wandering around the workshop looking to borrow tools (or even simply walking to a tool room) every time they need to change a spark plug. That means time wasted, fewer cars serviced, and revenue lost.

The answer? Make sure you give your technicians enough space in their work bay so that they have ALL the tools they'll need right there at their fingertips.

With the right work bay setup, you can make sure your technicians only need to leave their bay to test drive the vehicle they've finished working on (and the odd comfort break).

Remember, the longer your employees stay in their bay, the more cars they'll get through in the working day – and the more revenue you'll have at the end of the year.



2 Plan from the start around workplace health and safety regulations

When planning a new workshop fitout, you will have to balance the overall need for revenue with the pressing requirement to create a workable space for everyday use.

Not only will you need to meet and surpass WH&S regulations, but you'll also have to create a work space that's easy to keep clean, tidy and well-presented, to attract and retain the best calibre technicians.

It's important to spend some time planning the most appropriate spacing between your hoists. While there are clear minimum standards, will that really be the best workable solution for your workshop? Would you be better advised to plan for a larger gap, to ensure better work flow as well as the maximum safety for your staff in the case of an emergency?

Your next decision is the choice between traditional two post hoists and in-ground hoists. With their smaller 'footprint', in-ground hoists take up less space, which means your bays can be narrower – and you can fit more bays into your available workshop space.

When you're planning lighting for your workshop, consider the alignment of vehicles within the bay. Ideally, you need a good source of illumination well forward in the bay, so it's not blocked out when the vehicle's bonnet is raised. You could also think about installing lights on the workshop walls for better all-round illumination and safety.



3

Ensure you meet your OEM's Corporate Identity standards

If you're working for a particular Original Equipment Manufacturer, odds are you'll be pretty familiar with their lengthy requirements for presenting their Corporate Identity.

In particular, European or Premium marques will have specific (high) standards around their CI that they will expect you to follow when designing your workshop fitout.

Often, vehicle manufacturers will offer generous rebates on workshop fitouts – provided that their Corporate Identity requirements are strictly met.

So it's important that you thoroughly understand and take into account your OEM's requirements for their Corporate Identity. Make sure you partner with a supplier that can work within your OEM's requirements, and deliver a solution to meet them – without the heartache and expense of having to correct parts of your fitout that don't measure up.



4

Design a fitout that complies with Australian standards

When designing your ideal workshop, it's worthwhile bearing in mind the requirements of Australian Standards from the beginning.

These Standards are constantly changing over time; so be sure to check with your supplier whether they stay up-to-date with the most recent requirements before you commit to an order.

When you're choosing a vehicle hoist, there are obvious safety benefits from choosing a model that meets or exceeds applicable Australian Standards. Some hoists currently available in Australia don't feature support arm restraints, or rubber pads on load points – both of which are part of Australian Standards. Unfortunately, such hoists have been involved in serious or fatal incidents when vehicles have shifted.

Australian law also calls for vehicle hoists to be serviced every 12 months – and unannounced inspections can happen at any time.

To save yourself from having to respond to a 'make good' order at short notice, it makes sense to have an ongoing service plan in place from an experienced provider. That way, you can rest assured your service provider will be responsible for ensuring your hoists are serviced as needed.

Lastly, however well-trained and experienced your workshop team is, the fact is accidents do happen, which makes a workshop spill kit a must-have. Obviously, running to fetch a spill kit when there's slippery liquids on the workshop floor is a very bad idea. So make sure you plan to have the right size spill kit for your workshop area, and that it's located accessibly within 20 metres of where a spill emergency may occur.



5 Reduce your workshop's impact on the environment

It's no secret that environmental concerns have become more and more prominent in Australia over the last decade.

And while you might not think it's your number one priority, there are some straightforward design features you can incorporate to polish your environmental credentials for customers.

It's important to take care with the handling and disposal of waste oil. In your busy new workshop, you'll be producing many litres of waste oil every working day. So plan to install a space for a waste oil trolley between every two work bays.

Along with waste oil trollies, plan to install sufficient waste points around the workshop to minimise the distance your technicians have to travel with 95 litres of dirty, used oil.

By reducing how far the trollies have to travel, you'll also be reducing your risk of a disruptive and dangerous oil spill.

One environmental requirement that's sure to become more and more common in Australia is the need for vehicle exhaust extraction fans. Already a mandated WH&S requirement in many countries overseas, vehicle exhaust extraction systems help remove harmful gases from your workshop and reduce risk to your employees and customers.

All signs point to extraction fans becoming a far greater consideration in Australian workshops in the future. By installing them in your workshop now, you can be a step ahead when today's 'best practice' becomes tomorrow's legislated requirement.

Build it and they will come

How a better workshop fitout helps you attract and retain better staff

It's a fact – the best vehicle technicians simply won't settle for working in an untidy, dim, badly laid out workshop.

Whether you're working for a particular OEM, or as an independent workshop, standards of presentation and layout have never been higher. Which means that if your workshop doesn't measure up, you won't be top of the list as an employer of choice.

It's a vicious cycle – without the best technicians, standards can slip, which leads to customer dissatisfaction, which means fewer bookings, leading to less revenue, and having less money to spend on fitting out a best practice workshop to attract the best technicians.

Don't start your new workshop fitout on the wrong foot. Investing a little more today can help ensure the best ROI from your workshop time in the future.



A better workshop begins with choosing the right partner

With so much to consider within one workshop fitout, it helps to partner with a team that has successfully delivered multiple projects across Australia.

With more than 20 years' experience in the automotive industry, Levanta has delivered some of the most innovative and cost-effective workshop fitouts in Australia.

Whether your workshop is in need of a refurbishment, an expansion, or a brand new complete fitout, Levanta's experienced experts can help.

To discuss your workshop fitout needs, call Levanta today on 1300 577 541.

