

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is a Key Performance Indicator (KPI)?

A KPI is a statistical fact or numerical value generated from transactional event records. For the automotive industry, KPIs represent total repair order (RO) counts, average RO dollars, average RO parts sales, average RO labor sales, and other well-defined metric indicators. A key feature of KPIs is that KPI results can be filtered by user-defined parameters, such as geography, vehicle year, make, or model, and time.

2. What are the benefits of knowing KPIs?

KPIs provide the benchmark metrics from which to gauge individual shop performance. By knowing where you stand compared to the local competition, and knowing your shop's performance compared to national averages, you are armed with the information on trends in real-time and you can act on those numbers – whether positive or not so favorable – in a timely fashion.

3. How were the KPIs selected?

KPIs underwent a three-stage process to get included in the Mitchell 1 ShopMeter. First, a “top ten” list of desired KPIs was generated focusing on the core automobile characteristics of Year, Make, and Model (YMM). Next, the database was scrutinized to identify data constants that would support analysis and selectable query of the desired KPIs. Finally, the revised list was submitted to the Automotive Services Association (ASA) for review by their Mechanical Operations Committee and key members of the ASA team. The KPIs reported in ShopMeter are the combination of this selection process. Mitchell 1 intends to expand the list of available KPIs based on enhanced data processing and suggestions from users like you.

4. Where does the KPI data come from?

The KPI data is generated from thousands of repair shops across the nation. Shops that use Mitchell 1 Manager systems provide the transactional data for analysis in an aggregated form.

There are three essential components of the source data:

- Personally identifiable information or individual shop information is never used in analysis.
- All data is used in an aggregated form to generate averages and total counts. A specific shop's data is never used alone and KPI subscribers cannot identify an individual shop – ever!
- All source data is transactionally accurate and data fields are processed to eliminate incorrect or missing information. Subscribers can trust the integrity and security of the data source.

5. Is there any personally identifiable information in the statistics?

No personally identifiable information is ever contained in the data analyzed by Mitchell 1 ShopMeter users. All personally identifiable information, such as shop name, shop ID, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, or customer data is completely stripped out of the database before analysis. All information is then re-assembled in aggregated form to deliver database totals or averages. Zip code information is retained solely for the purpose of generating geographic KPI analysis, and zips are converted to latitude/longitude values to preserve shop privacy.

6. How is the source data protected?

The source data is warehoused in Mitchell 1's secure facility in Poway, CA. These data are then transformed into an analysis database that is completely separate from the original data – but retains the transactional accuracy of the source minus personally identifiable information.

7. How often is the database updated?

Unlike annual or periodic publications that collect and report their data months after the events took place, Mitchell 1 ShopMeter data is updated and refreshed every month! Premium subscribers can choose weekly or even daily updates of their data.

8. What kind of shops am I comparing when I use the Mitchell 1 ShopMeter?

The ShopMeter database reflects mainstream aftermarket repair facilities located across the nation. Currently, only shops using Mitchell 1 Manager systems contribute to the analytic database. However, many shops using non-Mitchell 1 management systems are very similar to Mitchell 1 shops, and ShopMeter users can feel confident that the KPIs reflect solid averages, totals, and trends that are representative of the aftermarket automotive repair segment of the industry.

9. How much data makes up the KPI analysis?

Mitchell 1 ShopMeter analyzes 1600 nationally distributed databases containing over seven million transactional records. ShopMeter subscribers are able to search all database transactions since 1994 for vehicle years 1974 to present.

10. Are there different levels of KPI analysis available?

Not yet. But they are coming. Currently, the Mitchell 1 ShopMeter you are using is the only version available. Premium services will be released in the near future, on a subscription basis. They will offer customized KPI reports, targeted automotive data analysis, and full access to the entire data repository. Features of this service will include top five to 50 sorting, broader geographic segmentation, full Y/M/M range look-ups, odometer readings, and service date availability from 1994 to present. Additional KPI services are planned for 2009, including repair reference look-ups, broader vehicle classes (including trucks), and analysis by major service categories.

11. How is local data selected?

A mathematical algorithm is applied to the data which converts all zip codes to latitude / longitude values. When a user enters their zip code, a circular geographic buffer is extended from that zip code which returns shop data from all shops in the database within a 50 mile diameter. Converting the zip code to a latitude / longitude preserves the locational privacy of an individual shop.

12. How do I use Mitchell 1 ShopMeter?

Mitchell 1 ShopMeter is an Internet-based utility that displays the data you want in a familiar Web-page format. After you log into ShopMeter, you may walk through a tutorial, get more information, or view KPI reports.

13. What query selections are available on the Mitchell 1 ShopMeter site?

ShopMeter customers can search all database transactions for vehicle years 1974 to present. Users can select local averages and totals based on zip code, and national averages and totals. This information can be analyzed by vehicle year and make, and by when the service or repair was performed. Results are presented as total number of repair orders, or average RO cost, or average labor cost, or average part cost.

14. Are KPIs set in percentages?

KPIs are presented as real transactional values. That means they are shown as total counts, or average dollars, or total dollars, depending on the user selection. There are no percentages used in the analysis.

15. How do I make the KPI applicable to my geographic area?

By inserting your zip code, the KPI analysis will return information from all shops in the database that are within 50 miles of your zip code. In this way, you can compare your shop data with the shop down the street, across town, and in neighboring cities.

16. Is there a way to look at the KPI in a regional setting, such as Southern California?

Not yet. This capability is scheduled to be available as a premium feature in the near future, and it will include regional selection and annotation.

17. When I set selection criteria and click “submit”, I get a “no data found”. Why?

There are hundreds of vehicle models and thousands of year/make combinations of vehicles on the road today. Most likely your selection was for a low frequency year/model and repair time period and location that did not have any records. Try expanding the repair date to include 2006-2008 and increasing the model year range. Set the threshold value lower, like 10 or even 0. Also, try your search from the national averages tab.

18. How can I provide suggestions for changes, additions, or modifications to specific KPIs?

Mitchell 1 welcomes suggestions for improvements, changes, modifications, enhancements, and additions to the KPI selection. We want to know what information is most valuable to you and how we can present it to you better. Please e-mail your suggestions and comments to jon.vance@mitchell1.com, or post a message on the Shop Management User's Group at <http://www.managerforum.net/index.php>. Include ShopMeter in the subject line.