



Miriam Deitcher

Director, Gobert Smash

Not your typical smash repair shop

WE SPOKE WITH ONE OF THE INDUSTRY'S NEWEST BODY SHOP OWNERS, EXPERIENCED BUSINESSWOMAN MIRIAM DEITCHER, WHO TOOK THE PLUNGE EARLY LAST YEAR AND BACKED HERSELF TO BUILD A SUCCESSFUL COLLISION REPAIR FACILITY.

As a way of introducing herself, I asked Miriam to tell us a bit about who she is and where she's come from. Miriam describes herself as "an American-born out-of-the-box marketer and motorbike racing enthusiast". She is a professional marketer who, up until the end of 2018, spent 18 years as director of integrated marketing at Progressive Insurance, a \$US30 billion organisation. "Every day, for 18 years, I studied the mindset of the people involved in car accidents as those people were my customers."

Progressive Insurance is the No.1 motorcycle insurer in America, and when they began sponsoring motorcycle racing, Miriam fell in love with the sport. The reception at Gobert Smash is motorcycle racing themed with her personal memorabilia collection from all over the world.

However, Miriam's passion for

motorcycle racing extended beyond her career at Progressive: "In 2011, as a hobby, I founded Flat Track Live (FTL), which quickly became the number one professional flat track motorcycle racing site, with almost 500,000 followers on Facebook and 50,000 on Instagram." Clearly a sign of her entrepreneurial spirit.

So, how did an experienced, professional marketing executive with one of the largest insurers in America come to be running a collision repair business in Southwest Sydney? Miriam initially came to Australia to assist a friend having personal problems but, soon after arriving, a smash repair facility that became insolvent caught her attention. "The equipment came up for auction and my first instinct was to do it – submit a bid."

Intuitively, it made complete sense.

The facility was perfectly located in Gregory Hills, the fastest growing part of Australia, with businesses and homes going up everywhere. Also, it was only 20 minutes from the new Western Sydney International airport scheduled to open in 2026.

With only one day to decide what to do, on the spur of the moment she submitted a bid thinking there was no way she would win – but she did. "So, just like that, I was starting a new chapter on the other side of the world in a repair industry I knew little about. My entire life, I've been a risk averse person, only working for companies and not owning a business, which made it an even crazier move. However, we opened for business a little over one year ago."

As this was a business founded, owned and run by a professional



marketer, Miriam was looking for a name that she could build into a strong brand, so calling it “Southwest Sydney Smash” or something similarly uninteresting was never going to work. “I’m a huge fan of motorcycle racing, and the Goberts are a famous motorcycle racing family from this area, so I went with Gobert Smash.”

Not only did Miriam have to learn how to run a small business in a new industry in a country where she knew virtually no one, she had to survive with a kindergarten level understanding of Australia, from everyday life to car repair terms. “Did I have a business plan, people ask? Definitely not, since I had only 24 hours to make a decision and another 24 hours to come up with a company name to register, I had no time to do anything except to jump right in and go for it.”

I asked Miriam what makes Gobert different to the 3,000 or so other collision repair facilities. “Today, Gobert Smash is fresh and modern, from its traffic-stopping one-of-a-kind neon exterior, that I sure can be seen from space, to its customer-focused approach with total transparency from the first call until the customer drives away satisfied. I’ve brought a woman’s unique touch and spin to what is traditionally a ‘man’s industry’, providing extra customer benefits such as an area for kids to play while parents wait, coffee and snacks, and a



It really is a team game.



Miriam Deitcher



work area with free Wi-Fi.”

And, she’s also put those many years at Progressive to work. “That experience drives my gut instinct that I use daily to run my business. Because of the culture and environment we’ve created, Gobert Smash has been able to attract and keep the best people, too. The team truly cares about the business and our customers. We have 15 employees and have almost outgrown our warehouse-sized facility. The shop offers vehicle repair services from small dents and dings to heavy hits and custom car restoration.”

Miriam understands the importance of working with the right partners who continue to support the business. “We have state-of-the-art equipment, such as Pan Spray Booths, Car-O-Liner benches, Axalta’s Cromax paint system and we run the business with iBodyshop.”

With an insurance background, Miriam understands all too well the importance of risk mitigation, so from day-one she established relationships



that generate work from multiple sources, including insurers, dealers, fleet, private work and, of course, restos.

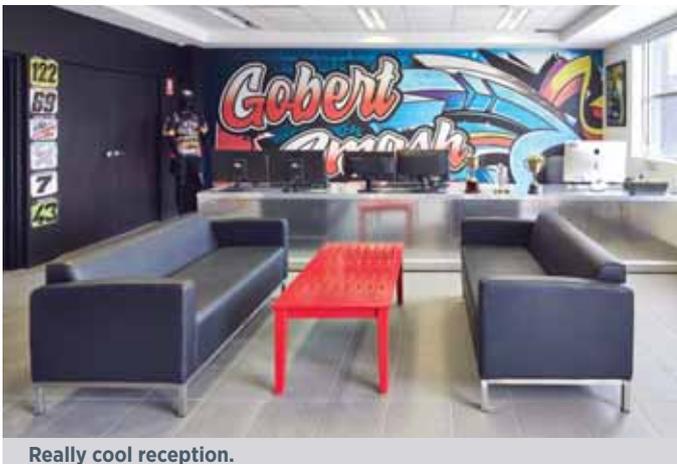
“I don’t pretend to be an expert in this industry – obviously – but I do know about people and I have a team of exceptionally experienced staff. I rely on their expertise to ensure we stay at the cutting edge of industry developments, particularly with the rapidly changing technology that we deal with every day.”

As a strong independent business professional, Miriam is passionate about increasing the number of women working in our industry. “One of the ways we do this here at Gobert Smash is a focus on attracting and retaining

young talent. At the moment we have two female apprentices on board, one in panel beating and another in spray painting. I take the view that if you can’t find the right talent, then grow the right talent yourself.”

Miriam goes on to say: “At the risk of stating the obvious, women and men are different – it’s a fact. I do a lot of things at my shop that a male owner would never dream of, from our extra customer touches to doing more for our employees. For example, on Fridays, I buy the whole shop lunch and we eat together as a family – perhaps it’s a maternal touch.”

In closing, Miriam said: “This industry is so exciting and it’s a real thrill to be part of it. Honestly, this past year has been the hardest year of my life. However, I had tremendous faith in myself. We are only one year into the journey, and the adventure is truly just beginning. I’m always looking each day for challenging the norms in the industry to make things better for consumers.”



Really cool reception.



Gobert Smash merchandise.



Applying Cromax inside the Pan Spraybooth.



It’s so much easier with Car-O-Liner.