

# Manheim Promotes 'Super' Reconditioning Services

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With great auto reconditioning comes great auto sales.

Manheim's newest promotion uses a group of comic book superheroes called the Frontline Force to draw attention to the company's reconditioning services.

Company officials discussed the desire to spotlight Manheim's reconditioning services, and the name change to Frontline Services.

"We really believe our products and services help make our customers' vehicles frontline ready," said David Bercik, Manheim's director of marketing.

"When they go back to the lot, they are ready to sell."

The characters represent Manheim's five reconditioning services.

"Pristine" represents vehicle detailing; "Torque" markets light mechanical repairs; "Wizard" is the face of paintless dent removal and minor repairs; "Flex" spotlights Manheim's auto body repair; and "Flair" embodies vehicle customization.

"We wanted to have a little fun," Bercik said.

The campaign has an elaborate Web site, with comic book stories and even villains for the Frontline Force.

The flashy marketing is only part of Manheim's latest promotion. Manheim Automotive Financial Services offers dealers financing for the recon services.

"That's a pretty significant

thing," Bercik said, "because it's not been an option that's been available to customers before."

MAFS dealers can floor plan Frontline Services with 0-percent interest through the end of July.

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Gary Disharoon, Manheim's director of reconditioning operations, said the increase in Internet buying and selling has made a quick turnaround essential.

"Dealers don't have time to send their cars through five or six sublet contracts," Disharoon said. "Those are the guys taking advantages of these services."

Manheim has mainly worked franchise stores and

wholesalers, he said, but independents are becoming more aware of the services available.

Part of the new campaign is having local auction staff promote the reconditioning services more, Bercik said.

"They do all their business in the lanes," he said, "so we're not taking them back to the reconditioning area."

Disharoon said this helps highlight the work of recon staff who work on thousands of cars a day away from the spotlight.

Disharoon said dealers typically can get a \$2 return for every \$1 they spend on reconditioning.

"We certainly believe that," he said, "but we also believe the repairs are going to make the car sell quicker."

"So a faster turn in the car is money. It's more profit for the dealer."

Vic Fiore, president of Metro America Remarketing in Manheim, Pa., has a small retail store and reconditioning shop, in addition to his remarketing business.

Fiore used to do all his own detailing before Manheim, Pa., opened its state-of-the-



Photo Courtesy of Manheim

**RECON POWER:** Manheim's South Seattle Auto Auction displays Frontline Force character "Flex," representing Manheim's Frontline Services. The new marketing campaign focuses on Manheim's reconditioning services, with "Flex" representing the body shop.

art recon facility. Now, he leaves it to the auction.

"It's cheaper for me than running it out of my own detail shop," he said.

Fiore even closed his detail shop.

He praises the recon services, but is a little ambivalent about the marketing campaign.

Fiore said dealers are concerned with the bottom line — how good is the work, how fast can they get the job done, and is the price competitive?

"That's all I'm concerned with," Fiore said.

Rob Frazier, who works in Frontline Services for Manheim's Dallas-Fort Worth Auto Auction, said the first month has gone well.

"We've had a lot of people come to the booth and ask

questions about the Frontline Force," he said.

Frazier said it's too soon to see the effect on recon business, but it is drawing more attention to the department.

He said employees are on board with the campaign.

"The recon (staff) is enjoying it, especially the detail guys," Frazier said. "They're working extra hard to make sure every car looks as good as it can."

The Frontline Force campaign kicked off at 25 auctions across the country and will expand to others later in the year.

