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OFFERS GROWTH TO U.S. AFTERMARKET, PROGRAM DISTRIBUTION GROUPS

BY RICHARD MEZADURIAN | Contributing Editor

Mexico is more than just a friendly neighbor to the south – it’s an important geopolitical ally of the United States. It’s a country rich in heritage and tradition. Most important, it is the third largest trading partner of the United States, and increasingly, it has become an important factor for U.S. aftermarket companies.

Over the past two decades, the Mexican aftermarket has developed a cohesion that has made it attractive to U.S. manufacturers. As such, it also has attracted the interest of U.S.

program distribution groups who have found new sources for growth in that market. As Mexico’s aftermarket continues to evolve, it will offer many opportunities for U.S. suppliers.

The growth of Mexico into a world economic power has been an important growth driver for the aftermarket. Since 1990, Mexico has seen a five-fold increase in GDP from \$262 billion (U.S.) to 2013’s \$1,260 billion. In 2014, Mexico

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Mexican aftermarket

“ A convergence of factors is making these very good times for Mexican parts distributors. ”

ranked as the 15th largest economy in the world. Although the economy has improved, Mexico is still a significantly poorer country than the U.S.

Economic growth in Mexico has not been limited to one sector. In 1980, petroleum exports accounted for almost 75 percent of Mexico's exports, but today that number is only 7 percent. Industry now constitutes a third of the nation's GDP. The automotive sector is among the strongest. The U.S. Big 3 have been manufacturing cars in Mexico since the 1930s, and in recent decades they've been joined by Volkswagen, Nissan, Toyota and others. In 2013, both BMW and Volkswagen announced billion dollar investments in Mexican plants. Mexico has signed free trade agreements with more than 44 countries, and can export cars duty free to every continent. In 2014, two-thirds of the 3.2 million vehicles produced in Mexico were shipped to the U.S.

This rising economic tide in Mexico has lifted many boats. And it has put cars in driveways, too. Since 2000, Mexico has seen a surge of motor vehicles in operation. Fifteen years ago, there were roughly 16 million cars, trucks and buses on the road. By 2014, that number has

more than doubled to 33 million. The mixture of vehicles found on Mexican roads is quite diverse.

Given the proximity of the United States and the lengthy land border between the two countries, vehicles in Northern Mexico tend to skew more towards what you might see in the U.S. Southwest. But as you move south from the U.S./Mexico border, the vehicle parc becomes more diverse. While there will still be a fair amount of U.S. brands, you are much more likely to see Nissans and Volkswagens that are not commonly offered in the U.S. Many of those vehicles are locally produced in Mexico.

Nissan/Renault has become the dominant car company in Mexico with a 28 percent market share. GM and Volkswagen each have about 18 percent of the market, while Ford and Chrysler each command about 10 percent. The remaining 16 percent of the market is scattered amongst all the remaining brands.

Aftermarket growth drivers

Several important factors are promoting aftermarket ...CONTINUE READING ▢

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TRAINING

Distributors seek key contacts at Automechanika Chicago

BY JAMES E. GUYETTE
News Correspondent

Distributors who are either attending or hosting a booth at the Automechanika Chicago show being held April 24-26 at the McCormick Place West exhibition center will find numerous avenues for reaching targeted markets.

Expecting more than 400 exhibitors throughout the aisles and 8,500-plus attendees in search of products and training, Automechanika Chicago is showcasing a wide spectrum of offerings.

Among the key categories being presented are Parts & Components, Electronics & Systems, Accessories & Tuning, Repair & Maintenance, IT & Management and Service Station & Car Wash.

Truck Competence is another industry sector that will be covered, ranging from parts and accessories, maintenance, body repairs and shop equipment.

The array of global industry professionals traversing the show floor includes independent

shop owners, managers, jobbers and technicians. Anyone representing repair shops, service centers, collision repair and fleet management operations will be able to leverage the latest innovations being displayed by an extensive lineup of domestic and international exhibitors.

“You know Chicago – we’ll be getting people from all over the world,” observes Adrian Jimenez, manager of Chicago operations at The Wheel Group. Headquartered in Los Angeles with 18 distribution facilities located in major cities throughout the U.S. and Canada, TWG is both a manufacturer and distributor specializing in aftermarket wheels and accessories.

The company’s global presence includes customers in Korea, Japan, Indonesia and Australia. It supplies operations such as Canadian Tire, Discount Tire, Big O Tire, Pep Boys, Summit and JEG’s.

“We’re bringing a couple of wheels from the Sacchi line and also from the Akita Racing line,” Jimenez says. Several product releases

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“LKQ aims to reach its targeted customer base of professional collision and mechanical repairers.”

will be highlighted. “We’re going to have a lot of new styles coming out this year, so you’ll get first picks on them.”

TWG also stocks a wide variety of trailer wheels, truck wheels, and OE wheels “to provide the largest selection of products to fit the needs of every customer.”

Global Connections

“Automechanika gives us the opportunity to connect with a global audience of technicians and shop owners in an environment that encourages dialogue about the automotive aftermarket,” according to Walter Scott, senior vice president and chief marketing officer at Advance Auto Parts.

“As the largest aftermarket parts provider in North America, we know that major events such as Automechanika can strengthen our partnerships with customers beyond just the fundamentals of their businesses,” he explains.

“We will be featuring new product enhancements from MotoLOGIC, MotoREV and

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MotoSHOP and new training courses from CTI and MotoSKILL. We encourage all attendees to stop by our booth to check out the latest from MotoSHOP and CTI,” says Scott, adding that Advance Professional Driven by CARQUEST has a world-class product group of quality parts brands that customers can trust, with access to inventories from WORLDPAC and Autopart International.

Salvage and aftermarket parts supplier LKQ also will be exhibiting at the inaugural Automechanika Chicago.

LKQ reports that it is seeking to reach its targeted customer base of professional collision and mechanical repairers. The event additionally affords an opportunity for the company to gather customer feedback regarding upcoming new products and services that the firm may offer in the future....CONTINUE READING □



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TRAINING

Getting more than training out of Automechanika Chicago

BY TSCHANEN BRANDYBERRY
Motor Age Managing Editor

Automechanika Chicago is making its U.S. debut this April, but aside from the wide variety of courses from top industry trainers, there are other reasons to take some time away from your business and make it a long weekend in the Windy City.

Specific to the event, city and show organizers have made it easy to get to and from partner hotels to McCormick Place West and back.

“Many years ago we opened dedicated bus lines. In addition to the surface streets, buses and cars coming into the building, we also have an incredible bus lane that is an express bus lane that runs basically parallel to the trains coming in from the city through a dedicated tunnel that’s only open when conventions are in town to make the drive from the downtown hotels to the campus within five to seven minutes,” Don Welsh, president and CEO of Choose Chicago, said in a video interview.

The loop will pick up attendees at partner hotels (check out the list at MotorAge.com/AMChotels), and there will be transportation from the hotels to Navy Pier for an opening night party on April 24 from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The event is open to all attendees and exhibitors, and includes drinks, appetizers and entertainment.

Navy Pier also is one of several attractions Choose Chicago representatives highlighted as places not to miss after show hours or for your families coming along for the weekend. Darrell Baker, Choose Chicago’s vice president sales, trade shows, pointed out lists of attractions, including the free Millennium Park, Lincoln Park Zoo and Cloud Gate (the “Bean” where many people snap pictures), as well as Lurie Garden, the Skydeck Chicago in the Willis Tower, Lookingglass Theatres, Broadway in Chicago, Shedd Aquarium and Chicago White Sox, among many others. (Sorry, Cubs fans, they’re on the road that weekend.)



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“Exhibitors can perform their own work using their own tools in any size booth.”

For those driving into the city, there are various public transportation options, from L Trains, buses and taxis to the high-speed Metra commuter rail train connects outlying suburbs to downtown. ChooseChicago.com has links to places where you can park should your hotel not have parking and lots where you can pay ahead of time.

In addition to entertainment and attractions, there are more places to eat than can be listed, all fitting various price ranges.

“We have over 3,000 restaurants and taverns and bars and entertainment facilities in the downtown core. In terms of the whole package, of course we have some of the greatest hotels in the whole world. We have five of the top 10 hotel brands in the whole world,” Welsh says. “You’re going to find a very, very dense, walkable downtown. Great shopping, great restaurants, great attractions, if people have time to take to the city in addition to being here for business purposes.”

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Back on the business side of things, event organizers have tried to make it easy to plan your schedule. Registration is open, and all courses are listed with times and other information at MotorAge.com/AMCschedule. Putting a plan on paper is important to making the event a success, according to Brian Canning, a Motor Age contributor who has written about attending industry events. He suggests writing out what

you want to accomplish at the event, making that plan when registering and sticking to it once in Chicago.

You also can take advantage of the event to talk to shop owners and technicians from around the country and see what they are doing in their shop and how they are solving problems and fixing vehicles. You most likely will discover they’re facing issues similar to you and they might have ideas and solutions ...CONTINUE READING □

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VENDORS

Automechanika Chicago offers industry a true international flair

BY JAMES E. GUYETTE
News Correspondent

Known as “The City of Big Shoulders” for its can-do attitude and rugged industrial might, Chicago has long relished its role as a global melting pot overflowing with opportunity. Throughout its history multitudes of people have poured in from every country on Earth to man the bustling stockyards, docks, depots and automotive assembly lines.

TRENDS & MARKET Analysis

At one time 28 carmakers were producing completed vehicles, and the very concept of the “car show” made its debut here in conjunction with the first American auto race held in 1895. Thus it is only fitting that the city hosts the inaugural Automechanika Chicago April 24-26 at the McCormick Place West exhibition center.

Produced by Messe Frankfurt with support from Advanstar Communications – the publisher

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JAKE COLVIN

VP of Global Trade Issues,
National Foreign Trade Council



Given recent overtures by the Obama Administration, how do you assess the potential of Cuba’s automotive market?



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Italy is Europe's fourth-largest auto parts supplier with more than \$545 million in annual sales.

The list of nations with a presence at Automechanika Chicago is impressive. Countries participating as of press time include Bulgaria, Canada, China, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Germany, Hong Kong, India, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, Malaysia, Mexico, Poland, Singapore, Spain, Taiwan, Turkey, the United Arab Emirates, the UK and the U.S.

Accenting the global flair of the industry event will be a series of International Pavilions presenting the latest offerings of automotive products and services.

"Since Chicago is a truly international destination easily accessible from across the USA, UK exhibitors are certain to benefit from having presence at this U.S. show," says Chloe Hyland, spokeswoman for the United Kingdom's Pavilion.

"Chicago is home to over 160,000 individual shops, of which 23 percent are within 500 miles of the exhibition center," she reports. "These

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open doors offer UK exhibitors opportunity to build relations with these international suppliers and retailers and increase their exports exponentially."

The Society of Motor Manufacturers and Traders (SMMT), which is presenting the UK Pavilion along with Messe Frankfurt, "exists to support and promote the interests of the UK automotive industry at home and abroad. Member companies benefit from the trade association's

support when striving for competitiveness and globalization," according to Hyland.

"The SMMT UK pavilion will have a prime location at the front of the exhibition hall, where a number of UK companies will take exhibition space. Visitors can expect to see Top Gear, BG Automotive, Presco Radiator Caps and Autokontrol, amongst others," she says.

"Top Gear will be displaying alloy wheels, tires, ...CONTINUE READING ▢

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VENDORS

Auto presence grows at CES

Engineers moving fast with sophisticated vehicle electronics at consumer show

BY JAMES E. GUYETTE
News Correspondent

Appearing to be en route toward becoming an actual car show, a record-setting array of automotive OEMs, vendors and assorted after-market entrepreneurs eagerly displayed a prominent presence at the International Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in Las Vegas.

TRENDS & MARKET Analysis

At an event previously known for homing in on home- and people-oriented electronic gadgetry, exhibit space dedicated to automotive innovations has nearly doubled over the past five years to exceed 165,000 square feet; this year's industry volume amounted to a 17 percent increase over the footage allotted during 2014's CES.

Research by the Consumer Electronics Association (CEA), the show's producer, reveals that about 30 percent of American households currently own a vehicle equipped with a communications, safety or entertainment system. The trade organization is forecasting that sales

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DALLAS LA PORTA

Co-founder,
DD Technologies



What are some of the details of your Iris aftermarket HUD unit and what smartphone applications will work with it?



What did La Porta say? Continue reading online.

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of factory-installed vehicle technologies will increase by 3 percent in 2015 to \$11.3 billion.

"As the car has become more connected we have seen the popularity of in-vehicle technologies increase as well. We created the Vehicle Intelligence Marketplace to showcase advanced innovations and how these



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“Exhibit space for automotive has nearly doubled over the past five years to 165,000 square feet.”

technologies are making the driving experience safer,” says Gary Shapiro, the CEA’s president and CEO.

“The continued growth of the automotive category at CES parallels the rapid evolution of in-vehicle technologies,” he points out. “From connectivity to autonomous driving technologies to other rapidly evolving innovations, consumers today view in-vehicle technology as an important factor in their buying decisions.”

Prototype cars that drive without a driver were basking in the CES spotlight with attention-attracting demonstration runs.

“OEM sales of self-driving cars will start slowly with small-scale availability around 2020,” predicts senior analyst Jeremy Carlson at IHS Automotive. Higher-volume production will begin in earnest in 2025 and grow rapidly in subsequent years, according to the company’s forecasts.

“There is no question that autonomous driving technology and self-driving vehicles will have tremendous long-term impact on the auto industry,” says Egil Juliussen, an IHS divisional director. “It also will likely have a positive influence on auto sales and vehicles in operation after 2035, presumably adding another 50 years of growth to the sector.”

Executives at BMW observe that “theoretically, vehicles which can steer themselves entirely independently can come into use after 2020. However, a number of legal issues and liability risks need to be clarified

before this happens. Initially, the challenge of the quantum leap from partially automated to highly automated driving must be mastered effectively. After that step has been accomplished, we definitely see potential for fully automated driving in a number of use cases.”

In the meantime, research and development projects within the field are continuing to power forward.

“Automated functions are at the top of the industry’s agenda. This requires an increase in the level of integration between sensors, controllers and actuators as well as redundancy strategies,” says Tolga Oal, TRW’s vice president of global electronics.

“For example, our Automated Vehicle engineering team is doubling in size in 2015 in order to meet the growing product development demand from our European, North American and Japanese customers,” Oal adds. “This is part of a wider effort in which the company is hiring engineers and technicians to also support the overall growth of our Driver Assist System product portfolio.”

Automotive game-changers

In addition to numerous suppliers, 10 of the larger automakers were hosting

booths and conducting demos at CES. Other OEMs and aftermarket enterprises without an official exhibit at the event were busy walking the show floor and making key connections.

“We did some ‘guerilla marketing,’” reports Dallas La Porta, co-founder with Dino Mariutti of DD Technologies. The company, based in West Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada and Italy, is gearing up to roll out its Iris aftermarket add-on heads-up display unit in the spring.

“We talked to some big distributors and they were impressed. We couldn’t ...CONTINUE READING □

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DEALERSHIPS

Chinese auto dealers are struggling

With sales slowing, dealers ask OEMs for financial assistance

BY BRIAN ALBRIGHT
Correspondent

China is seen by most of the world's automotive OEMs as the engine that will drive sales growth over the next decade. However, a recent slowdown in sales is putting the pinch on Chinese auto dealers, and they are asking the automakers to provide cash assistance to keep them afloat.

TRENDS & MARKET Analysis

According to the China Auto Dealers Chamber of Commerce, Chinese car dealers have offered steep discounts in order to meet sales targets so that they qualify for year-end bonuses. Those bonuses account for more than half of the dealers' annual profits. In 2011, those profit margins stood at roughly 9 percent. However, demand has slowed in China, and those margins are expected to fall to just 4 percent, according to Hong Kong-based Mizuho Financial Group.

Now, dealers are demanding reimbursement from the OEMs. The China Automobile Dealers Association (CADA) has asked them to share some of those losses, and announced that BMW had agreed to pay 5.1 billion

yuan (\$820 million) to the dealers. Audi also pledged 2 billion yuan in subsidies, according to a report in Reuters, and Daimler has paid China-based Mercedes dealers nearly 1 billion yuan.

"Prior to recent actions, there has not been a precedent for vehicle manufacturers to compensate dealers," says Randy Miller, global automotive and transportation leader at LMC Automotive. "For years, Chinese consumers have been flooding the market buying vehicles at record volumes. China is now near to being, if it isn't already, a mature market, which means that sales growth is going to slow down and level out. Auto dealers have been selling vehicles at losses to meet sales targets from OEMs. Dealers are pushing back on automakers to lower their sales targets to align with the reality of the market and for the dealers to maintain and/or grow their margins."

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Dealer Newsmaker

Q&A

ZAN CHILDRESS
Shop Manager,
Choice Automotive Group



Q

Since you service all makes and models as well as the used vehicle inventory, how are you sourcing parts?

A

What did Childress say? Continue reading online.

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TECHNOLOGY SOLUTIONS

3D printing for auto service repairs

New offering will allow shops to print small parts on demand

BY BRIAN ALBRIGHT
Correspondent

The use of 3D printers is exploding in industry and among consumers. The auto industry uses the technology for prototyping, but a new start-up is trying to expand one-off parts printing to auto repair shops.

TRENDS & MARKET Analysis

Print-A-Part will offer access to 3D print files for small parts like screws, bolts and washers so that companies can download them and print them at their own facility. Repairers could potentially produce their own small, plastic parts in minutes or hours (depending on the complexity).

The company is a division of Alacrity Engineering, a technology services and equipment-moving company based in New York. According to the company, a team of company and freelance designers have generated the 3D designs that can be downloaded via the service.

Gare Henderson, Print-A-Part's head design engineer and one of Alacrity's co-founders, says the idea for the printing service emerged from the company's own internal needs. "Alacrity provides technology moving services for factories, restaurants and other businesses, and as part of that process we found that in some cases we needed some small parts to complete a project," Henderson says. "We would have to wait a long time on those parts, but this is a very short notice business. So we started printing our own parts in-house with a 3D printer."

Customers pay a fee for the 3D designs. They can then download a part design in an STL file format that can be printed out on a variety of 3D printers. The parts are either printed as one single unit, or in some cases as a sheet of several screws or washers. Depending on the agreement, the file can be used for printing a set number of times before it expires.

Henderson says the company is still

working out the details of the business model. Right now, Print-A-Part offers limited-use licenses that allow users to access the file five times.

The company is focusing on businesses that do assembly work, including auto repair shops, prosthetics companies and other light manufacturing businesses.

"Our ultimate goal is to get into larger government and military contracts," Henderson says. "If a part breaks and you don't have time to go back to base to get that part, you can print it out. We're primarily focusing on industrial parts now, but we will meet whatever demand our customers have."

Ease of use is a critical part of the service. According to Henderson, the company is making the files as easy to use as possible.

"Our motto is 'no geeks or geniuses required,'" he says. "There are plenty of

While new to the aftermarket, 3D printing is well established among automotive OEMs.

Technology Newsmaker

Q&A

HARLAN SIEGEL
Vice President of Diagnostics,
Launch Tech USA



How will shops use GOLO and how is it different from other telematics offerings?



What did Siegel say? Continue reading online.

[Read full interview](#)

places to download 3D files on the Web, but they all assume a certain level of technical competence, or software is needed to convert the files for rendering. With our service, you can download the file onto a memory stick and plug it directly into ...CONTINUE READING ▢

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Handling tricky **SERVICE CALLS**

People hear what they want to hear. It's a cliché because it's true. One of the challenges we face is effectively communicating what is involved in a repair.

Let's start from the beginning: the phone rings and a potential customer is on the other end asking for a "quote" to replace a component on their car that you have never seen fail. As a good service advisor you ask them what leads them to believe that part is bad.

In most cases it quickly becomes apparent that one of several things is behind the call. The car is misbehaving and a web search landed them in a blog where alleged experts with handles to protect them from having to stand behind their ridiculous assertions spout about how all repair shops are a "rip off" and you can eas-

ily solve your problem with a bottle of some snake oil or the other. (Legitimate chemical companies please don't write me nasty emails. You know what I'm talking about.)

Another strong possibility is that they currently have their car at another shop and they don't like the answer or estimate they received for the repair. I will get back to that in a minute.

The next most likely is that someone told them that if a car acts a certain way it is always a fuel pump or fill in the blank with whatever condition you want. In some cases the caller is just not your customer. They are a train wreck looking for a location to happen, but in most cases they simply don't know what to say when you pick up the phone.

Customers understand that cars are expensive. They also have a good handle on what is in their checking account. What many cannot get their head around is that there are very rarely two ways to repair something correctly that are significantly different in cost.

They also have a hard time understanding the craft involved in not only performing the

nuts and bolts part of our job but particularly the fine art of pinpointing the root cause of their problem. So instead they ask you how much it will cost so that you are on the same page with them – guessing.

As I see it here is where the whole thing gets tricky. I am going to ask you to put on your consumer hat and imagine a medium to big-ticket item you are considering purchasing. If you called up the business you were considering buying from and said, "How much?" you would expect some kind of answer, right?

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DONNY SEYFER
Operations Manager
Seyfer Automotive, Inc.



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Of mice AND MEN

There are many stories, fables and examples of how the smallest of things affects us the most, personally and professionally, and here's another one.

Last weekend I went to visit my ailing father who was hospitalized and in bad shape. Poor dad is a poster child for the infirmed. He has had every illness known to modern medicine at least twice, and has survived them all much to the astonishment of many a renowned medical professional. Not to mention all of the mostly self-inflicted injuries he's suffered. I refer to my dad as "the little engine that could, but shouldn't have, and now we are on our way to the hospital."

The hospital he visits on a regular basis is a much-respected regional hospital that has been around for quite some time. Their reputation for various specialties is touted on the local airwaves and print media to the point that it is the automatic choice for the sickly, diseased and injured.

Many of this hospital's patients give little thought to where they will seek medical attention, and just aimlessly wander to this famed establishment leaving their egos at the door to prepare themselves for the huge dose of humility they are about to receive. Am I drawing any parallels yet?

“A sincere thanks, a hearty handshake and a smile can soften the most difficult customers.”

This hospital is a grand looking place indeed with a huge foyer replete with statues, artwork and fine furnishings. One huge wall is covered with pictures of the medical staff accompanied by a list of pedigrees each has acquired. Possibly a fitting tribute for such an obvious five-star resort of a hospital, but I am a skeptic and look for the proof.

Besides, my family doctor has one lambskin hanging on his wall, and it has nothing to do with his profession. It's a certificate of completion for "Hardwood Lumber Grading School." That's no joke. He's "board" certified, he claims. I do recommend checking his hands for splinters before certain types of examinations.

So here I am at the "Four Seasons Resort" ICU, in a spacious private room tending to the needs of my father. There is no rest for the sick in a hospital, nor for anyone else I found out. There is poking, prodding and testing by an endless array of personnel, bustling to and fro in an orchestrated dance akin to a Swan Lake ballet of medical coding and insurance billing. Sort of impressive, but busy nonetheless.

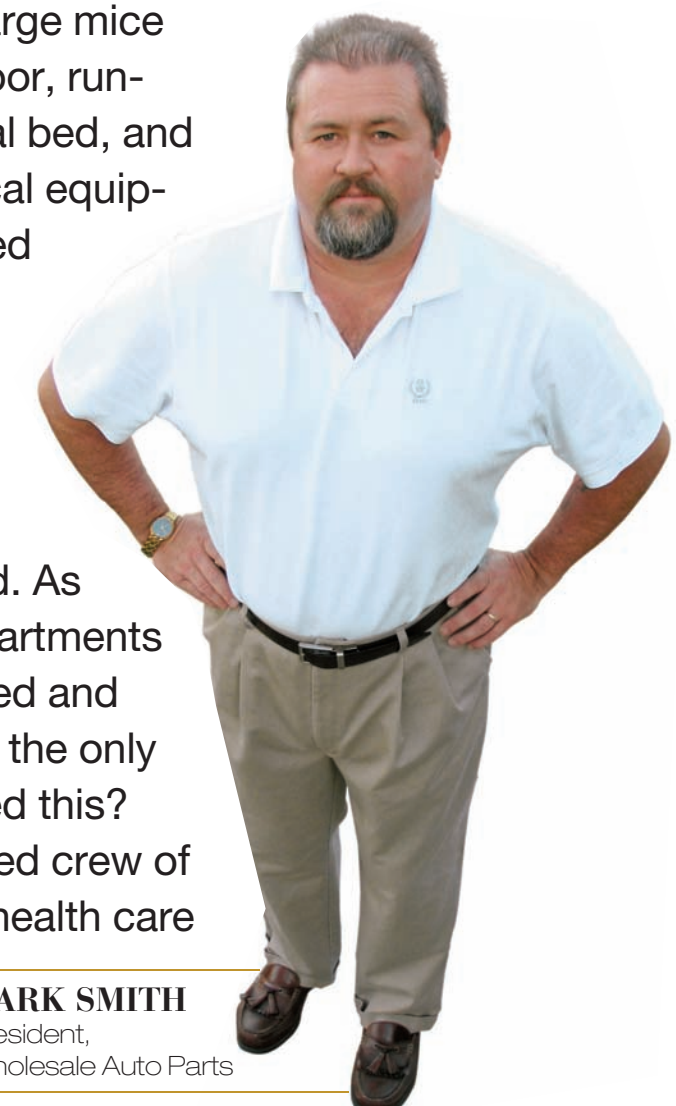
At about 1 a.m., things finally quieted down, and dad was drifting off to sleep. Some peace at last, and I began checking my messages when something caught the corner of my eye. I looked over, and nothing was

there. A few minutes later, another blur occurred just outside of my acute 20/80 vision. With a piqued interest, I sat quietly and intently looking around, and saw them.

Not 1, nor 2, but 3 large mice scurrying about the floor, running under the hospital bed, and climbing up the medical equipment. Horrified, I turned all of the lights on and began pushing any call button, pulling alert knobs, and pulling every emergency assist cord I could find. As staff from various departments began to arrive, I waited and pondered if I could be the only one who has witnessed this?

With a fully assembled crew of my father's assigned health care providers crowd-

ed into the room, ...CONTINUE READING □



MARK SMITH
President,
Wholesale Auto Parts

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EPA scraps changes to **SCRAP METAL RECYCLING**



Most auto salvage yards will probably take advantage of the new generator option.



Auto recyclers appear to have dodged a bullet as the Environmental Protection Agency finally pulled the regulatory trigger on a final rule (issued Jan. 13, 2015) having to do with recycling.

At risk has been whether auto recyclers would have to test each piece of scrap metal sent to a recycler for “legitimacy,” a test that would determine whether that particular piece of scrap contained hazardous material, and therefore could not be recycled. That was the prospect the EPA raised back in July 2011 when it issued a proposed rule called “Definition of Solid Waste.”

In comments sent to the EPA contesting provisions of that proposal, Michael E. Wilson, Chief Executive Officer, Automotive Recyclers Association, wrote, “ARA must ask EPA officials if it really is their intent to require a legitimacy test on each piece of scrap metal that is sold to processors for recycling as a valuable commodity?”

The ARA and other groups outside auto industry sectors argued scrap metal is not hazardous, and it should continue to be recycled as it always had been, outside the reach of Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) requirements. The RCRA is the EPA-administered law regulating solid waste disposal. The

agency reversed course and agreed.

EPA does not expect the final 2015 Definition of Solid Waste (DSW) rule to affect automotive recycling or other types of scrap metal recycling,” explains George Hull, a spokesman for the EPA. “EPA expects that scrap metal that is recycled according to normal industry business practices would typically meet the new legitimate recycling definition and no special demonstration or change in normal management practices would be needed for scrap metal to be considered legitimate under the new rule.”

However, things are changing with regard to hazardous substances salvage yards take out of unwanted autos before crushing them. The final rule offers salvage yards, two new options, according to Phillip Retallick, senior vice president, Compliance and Regulatory Affairs, Clean Harbors Environmental Services. Retallick worked for the U.S. EPA for 10 years, then later as director of the Delaware Solid and Hazardous Waste Program before joining the private sector.

One new option is registering with the EPA or relevant state agency as a certified recycling facility; the other is registering as a generator. The first option comes with

considerable recordkeeping, storage requirements, spill prevention, financial assurance, worker training and notification requirements with regard to collection of used oil, brake fluid, lead-acid batteries, PCB-contaminated wastes and other hazardous materials either removed or drained from salvaged cars. Facilities that certify as a recycling facility can accumulate those secondary hazardous materials until they are ready to sell the stored wastes to reclamation facilities. While this option may be attractive to some salvage yard owners and operators, most of these facilities may choose to avoid the regulatory commitments.

Retallick suspects most auto salvage yards will probably ...**CONTINUE READING** ▢



STEPHEN BARLAS
Washington
Correspondent



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What's behind the HUGE GROWTH IN SKU COUNT?

There's a lot of attention being paid to online commerce and eTailing, recently. An Auto Care Association study describes eTailing as the fastest growing segment of aftermarket sales and forecasts it will reach 20 percent of total aftermarket sales by the end of the decade.

This is significant because 55 percent of what they measured as eTailing were purchases by commercial customers – shops, fleets and other B2B activity. Consumer purchases made up only 45 percent of the total and projected to see much slower growth than the commercial volume.

The distinction between B2C and B2B is of little significance, however, when it comes to the data requirements. Because B2B buyers are nothing other than B2C buyers who happen to be at work. They bring their online search, navigation and shopping habits with them from home. And, aftermarket resellers who are going to succeed online must offer the product information and buying experience that all customers bring with them, naturally.

Industrial products giant W.W. Grainger Inc. was an early adopter of online commerce strategies, and now

does more than one third of their volume online (completely B2B). Further, they expect that number to grow by 20 percent annually. They've staked out that leadership position in part because of a commitment to rich product content and an online experience that is obsessed with the customer's needs. There's nothing comparable to Grainger in the aftermarket – yet.

If you hope to grow your online sales volume, the most important words for you and your supply chain partners to remember are "It's all about the data." And, specifically, I'm referring to product data – all of the information about a product aside from the vehicle applications. This is the content about every product in the aftermarket that is the subject of the PIES specification (Product Information Exchange Standard – www.autocare.org). PIES was originally a very good idea in search of a market mandate. Weights and dimensions, UPC numbers and HazMat codes were important throughout the supply chain. But, load sheets and other methods had emerged over the years to effectively get the content from the supplier to the reseller. The job was getting done (somewhat laboriously) and the PIES standard struggled to win mass adoption.

“In the last five years, however, the game has changed in two important ways.”

In the last five years, however, the game has changed in two important ways. First, the number of SKUs that must be managed by trading partners has grown into the millions. Second, the volume and variety of information about each of those SKUs has exploded. Using an industry standard and robust technology to manage and convey mass amounts of product content is no longer a choice – it's a necessity.

Both commercial customers and consumers have grown to expect the world at their fingertips thanks to Google, Amazon, eBay and others. Making use of drop shipment and integrated fulfillment solutions, online resellers are not limited to offering the products they have on the shelf. It's not uncommon for distributors to manage 500,000 SKUs or more. Many retailers manage 1.5 – 2.5 million SKUs in support of their online and special order business.

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SCOTT LUCKETT
VP, Industry Strategy
GCommerce Inc.



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Mexico is a bright spot **IN LATIN AMERICA**

After two years of low growth, the business landscape in Mexico is changing rapidly. The southern neighbor to the U.S. is ready to launch and is the bright spot in Latin American markets, according to John Price, managing director of Market Intelligence LLC.

“Reform-driven investment and delayed capital spending will drive the country’s growth,” Price told Overseas Automotive Council (OAC) members. “The near-shoring boost has made Mexico’s manufacturing sector one of the most cost competitive in the world.”

Price is a recognized thought leader on Latin America markets with more than 20 years of experience in the region, and is a valued source of thought leadership on Latin American markets for the Automotive Aftermarket Suppliers Association (AASA) and the OAC.

In his recent exclusive reports on Mexico and Latin American markets for AASA and OAC members, Price addressed what is changing in Mexico now to make it an even more important market for aftermarket parts manufacturers.

“Mexico’s recently enacted energy reforms include measures that promote investment in gas powered electricity generation in northern Mexico. This promises to dramatically lower electricity costs for Mexico-based manufacturing, further enhancing the sector’s competitiveness,” he noted.

“In spite of short-term challenges to the Mexican economy (cheap oil has weakened the peso), the reform agenda will help to improve Mexico’s economic competitiveness by boosting investment in energy, telecommunications and human capital,” Price explained. “The optimistic trajectory of the U.S. economy will further boost growth in Mexico, whose manufacturing sector is very much tied to U.S. industry. In contrast to Brazil, Chile and Colombia, consumer debt levels in Mexico remain modest so there is room to deepen the reach of car loans into the middle and working classes of Mexico’s 115 million population. Many analysts believe that Mexico is starting what promises to be a five-to-seven year economic growth cycle. Missing out would be a mistake.”

Despite positives in Mexico, other economies in Latin America continue to grapple with internal challenges, Price



“Many analysts believe that Mexico is starting a five-to-seven year economic growth cycle.”

noted. Brazilian growth is at risk for another one to two years, as its consumers struggle to pay down their debts before spending resumes. In Venezuela, over-valued official rates are depleting its once significant foreign reserves and causing politically damaging shortages of vital goods. Overall in Latin America, Price predicted that business-to-business (B2B) will win over business-to-consumer (B2C) as investment-driven sectors will outpace consumer-driven industries.

Price will be a keynote speaker at the 2015 AASA Vision Conference slated for March 16-17 at the NASCAR Hall of Fame in Charlotte, N.C. For more information about the AASA Vision Conference, visit www.aftermarketsuppliers.org.

Editor’s note: The OAC promotes the sale in foreign markets of automotive and heavy-duty products manufactured in North America. Those products include components, accessories, chemicals, hand and power tools, service maintenance and repair equipment, and paint and body supplies for both cars and trucks. OAC has more than 350 members in more than 40 countries. More information is available through its website, www.oac-intl.org. AASA (www.aftermarketsuppliers.org) exclusively serves manufacturers of aftermarket components, tools and equipment, and related products. □

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face the facts

WHEN IT COMES TO MARKETING ON SOCIAL MEDIA, REPAIR SHOPS PREFER FACEBOOK

BY BRUCE ADAMS | Managing Editor

Independent repair shops that use social media to promote their shop's services overwhelmingly prefer to use Facebook, according to the *Aftermarket Business World* 2015 Independent Repair Shop survey.

Seventy three percent of the shops responding said Facebook was their preferred social media channel. Respondents were permitted to select more than one channel. As a result, 26 percent said they use Google+, 11 percent use Twitter and 10 percent use LinkedIn.

Some 48 percent of respondents said their sales results stayed the same in 2014 compared to the previous year, while another 48 percent said they experienced a sales increase. Of those posting an increase, 23 percent said

they increased sales 1 percent to 5 percent and 16 percent increased sales 6 percent to 10 percent.

Looking ahead to 2015 sales, 43 percent expect their sales to stay the same while 52 percent said they expect to sell more in 2015 than in 2014.

Regarding preferred suppliers, 38 percent of respondents want to use auto parts retailers, 34 percent favor warehouse distributors and 23 percent prefer to buy from jobbers.

When it comes to the most important supplier quality, 29 percent of respondents cited parts availability, 23 percent said fair pricing and 14 percent said inventory options and carrying certain brands.

Thirty six percent of respondents said the number one product need of their customers is quality, 24 percent said price.

Methodology: This study was sent to readers of *Motor Age* magazine via email. Survey result are intended to show general market trends, not statistical certainties, as results were garnered from a small sample audience. □

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Auxiliary Lighting

Preferred supplier

Auto parts retailer	41%
Warehouse distributor	27%
Jobber	23%

Most important supplier quality

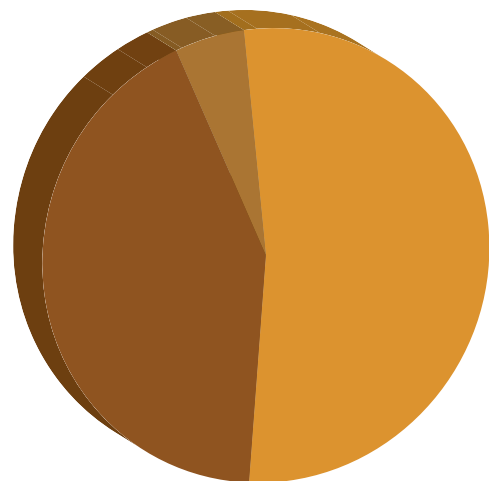
Fair pricing	20%
Parts availability	35%
Inventory options	12%

2014 auxiliary lighting sales

53%
Increased

42%
Held Steady

5%
Decreased



75% of independent shops report they make no auxiliary lighting sales over the Internet.



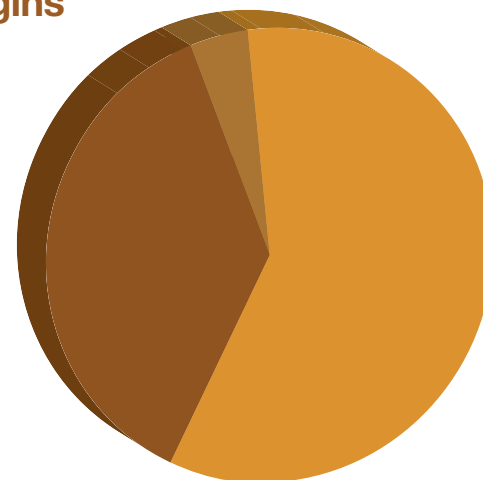
40% of independent shop respondents use 1-2 suppliers for their auxiliary lighting product needs.

Expected 2015 gross margins

59%
To Increase

37%
To Hold Steady

4%
To Decrease



2015 lighting sales expectations

To hold steady	37%
To increase 1-10%	45%
To increase 11-20%	8%
To decrease	4%

Customer needs

Quality	27%
OEM form, fit, function	20%
Price	30%
Availability	20%
Warranty	2%

70%
of respondents who utilize social media use

FACEBOOK

to promote their shop's auxiliary lighting services.

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Battery Chargers

Preferred supplier

Auto parts retailer	29%
Jobber	20%
Warehouse distributor	49%

Most important supplier quality

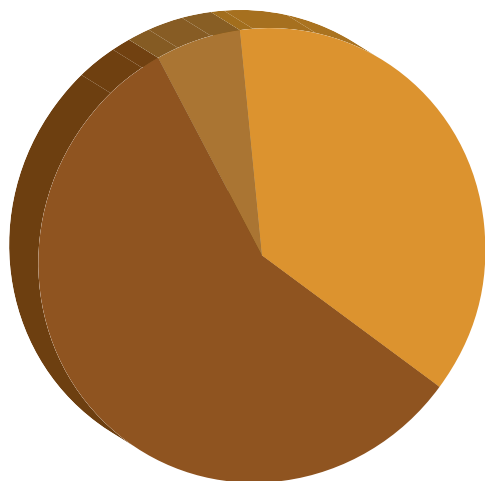
Comprehensive warranties	18%
Fair pricing	31%
Inventory options	14%

2014 battery charger sales

37%
Increased

57%
Held Steady

6%
Decreased



88% of independent shops report they make no battery charger sales over the Internet.



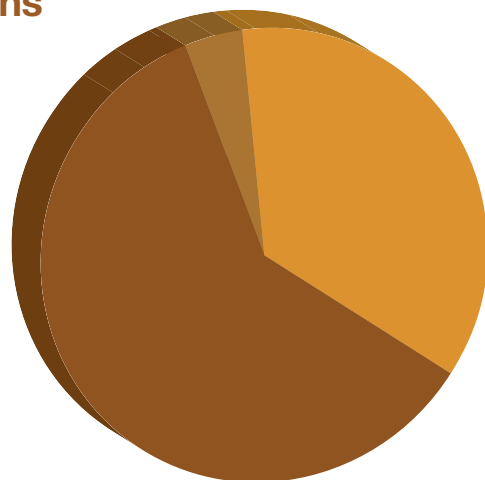
57% of independent shop respondents use 1-2 suppliers for their battery charger product needs.

Expected 2015 gross margins

36%
To Increase

60%
To Hold Steady

4%
To Decrease



2015 battery charger sales expectations

To hold steady	55%
To increase 1-10%	30%
To increase 11-20%	4%
To decrease	6%

Customer needs

Quality	29%
Brand	8%
Price	25%
Availability	25%
Warranty	6%

75%
of respondents who utilize social media use

FACEBOOK

to promote their shop's battery charger services.

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Water Pumps

Preferred supplier

Auto parts retailer	41%
Warehouse distributor	32%
Jobber	24%

Most important supplier quality

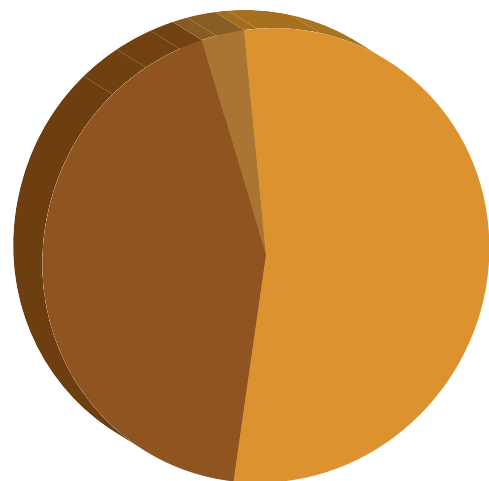
Inventory options	17%
Parts availability	36%
Fair pricing	20%

2014 water pump sales

54%
Increased

43%
Held Steady

3%
Decreased



88% of independent shops report they make no water pump sales over the Internet.



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facts**

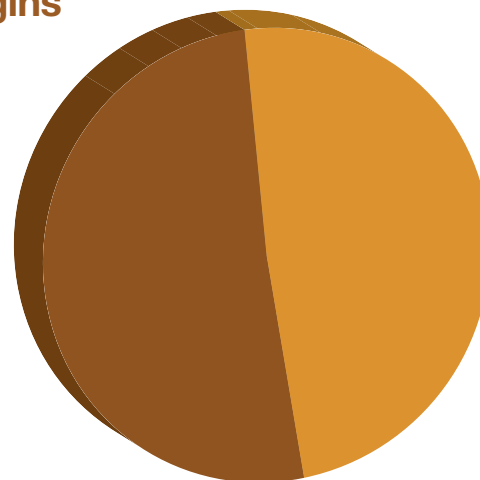
48% of independent shop respondents use 3-4 suppliers for their water pump product needs.

Expected 2015 gross margins

49%
To Increase

51%
To Hold Steady

0%
To Decrease



2015 water pump sales expectations

To hold steady	43%
To increase 1-10%	46%
To increase 11-20%	6%
To decrease	3%

Customer needs

Quality	50%
OEM form, fit, function	9%
Availability	18%
Price	17%
Warranty	3%

77%
of respondents who utilize social media use

FACEBOOK

to promote their shop's water pump services.

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