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# SWISS AFTERMARKET IS DIFFICULT, DESPITE A STRONG ECONOMY AND STABLE POLITICS

BY RICHARD MEZADURIAN | Contributing Editor

Switzerland is a rugged landscape dotted with incredible beauty, and the national psyche matches their terrain. The Swiss are known for their discreet banking laws, strict political neutrality and sweet confections. But just as important to the Swiss identity is a dedication to precision, an embrace of individual liberty and a sense of ruggedness in the face of nature.

These elements of the Swiss psyche combine to make a dynamic market for automobile sales and the aftermarket that has developed from it.

Many people see Switzerland as one relatively small country. It is in fact more like 26 even smaller states, called cantons, that make up Switzerland. The 26 cantons are each independent, but all contribute to a loose federal system that was established in 1848.

Switzerland doesn't have an official language. Rather, it has three of them. Depending on where you live within the country, you might speak

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## Analysis by market

### TECHNOLOGY

**Telematics:** GM, Nissan set ambitious timetables for autonomous vehicles.

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**Vendors:** Director of eBay Motors explains the website's aftermarket offerings.

### TECHNOLOGY

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### INTERNATIONAL

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## Research

**Reseller Study:** This annual reseller study by *Aftermarket Business World* examines the buying habits of professional and DIY customers.

## NACE Automechanika Atlanta

### COMMITMENT TO TRAINING

**Off the Road:** Agricultural vehicle repair and parts training digs into multiple mechanical systems.

**Virtual Training:** eBay unveils Virtual Tech training for job tips, parts guidance.

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## Opinion



**John Shoemaker**  
Careful repair planning improves work flow

Reseller Study



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**Jerry Hutcheson**  
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# Swiss aftermarket



Switzerland ranked 22 in the world for vehicle population density, but there is little vehicle diversity.



German, French or Italian, with German being the most prominent. Most Swiss tend to speak more than one of these languages, but speaking English or Portuguese is also rather common.

With a population of slightly more than 8 million people, Switzerland is not a big population center, and demographics indicate an overall shrinking population due to more people aging than being born. This is a common factor throughout Western Europe.

Yet, the Swiss economy outperforms its size, placing it 40th in the world with a gross domestic product (GDP) exceeding \$500 billion. Due to its modest population, the per capita GDP ranks 14th, globally, meaning it's a relatively wealthy nation. How do they derive that wealth?

As a country lacking many raw materials and a limited agricultural output, Switzerland was forced to develop an economy built on transforming imported raw materials into high-added-value goods destined for exportation. Think of items like Swiss chocolates or watches as examples. Swiss banking laws favoring secrecy and privacy also have made the nation a haven for wealthy investors. Tourism also

is an important industry in a country rich with natural beauty.

The density of motor vehicle registrations in Switzerland is quite high, with 4.5 million registrations as of 2016, which makes approximately 556 vehicles per 1,000 people. Countries with similar GDPs like Argentina and Saudi Arabia, average about 330 vehicles per 1,000 people. Contrast that with the U.S., where there are 800 vehicles per 1,000 people. Switzerland ranked 22nd in the world for vehicle population density. However, this dense population of vehicles doesn't necessarily translate to a diversity of vehicles.

Using 2016 as the last full year for which statistics are available, the Swiss auto market was dominated by European brands. The Volkswagen group (Volkswagen, Audi and Skoda), accounted for 26.5 percent of all sales. BMW and Mercedes were good for second and third place, respectively, at 7.8 percent and 7.5 percent.

Rounding out the top brands were Renault, ...CONTINUE READING ▣

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# Agricultural vehicle repair training DIGS INTO MECHANICAL SYSTEMS

By **JAMES E. GUYETTE** | News Correspondent

**R**epairing and maintaining agricultural equipment is a fertile field for qualified technicians and counter people. Creative applications of baling wire and duct tape are no longer sufficient solutions for ensuring that a modern farm's increasingly sophisticated machinery remains fully operational.

Although the available training resources are frequently grouped under the heading of "diesel mechanic," agriculture's requirements entail a broader set of skills that go beyond standard powertrain issues.

In addition to specialized functions performed by tractors, combines and other vehicles (plus complex attachments like seeders, spreaders, etc.), a lot of the equipment is going nowhere, as evidenced by stationary apparatus such as irrigation pumps and other systems vital for livestock survival and weather-sensitive planting and harvesting.

Forming a bucket brigade during an irrigation outage, for instance, would be woefully inadequate for a large ranch or poultry house utilizing a landlocked wellhead linked to a maze of feeder lines. Vast amounts of water are consumed 24/7 for both drink-

ing and waste removal, and a repairer needs to be readily equipped with the ability and components to troubleshoot and promptly fix the problem.

Whenever and wherever a breakdown occurs, speed and competence are critical.

"If they can't get their parts and their equipment repaired, they can't get the work done that they need to do," says Bill Grandy, an instructor at the New Castle School of Trades, with locations in New Castle, Pa., East Liverpool, Ohio and Baltimore.

"Traveling technicians" with mobile repair trucks are particularly well-positioned to serve an agricultural customer base.

At Pine Run Farm Repair in Burbank, Ohio, "Our two fully equipped service trucks accommodate all onsite repairs," reports owner Jim Flynn.

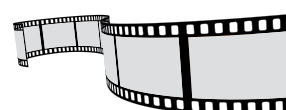
"We custom-make hydraulic hoses, stock several hose sizes and also carry hundreds of fittings for timely repairs." Maintaining "big square balers" is a much-in-demand specialty. "We repair most makes and models," he says, "and we also have traveled to several different states to do repairs to accommodate our customers." ...CONTINUE READING □

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**Parts Specialist A says a transaxle is used in front-wheel drive cars. Parts Specialist B says a transaxle can be used in rear-wheel drive cars. Who is right?**

- A. Parts Specialist A only**
- B. Parts Specialist B only**
- C. Both A and B**
- D. Neither A or B**

**Click here to see the answer.**



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# TELEMATICS/CONNECTIVITY

## GM, Nissan set ambitious timetables for autonomous vehicles

BY BRIAN ALBRIGHT  
Correspondent

While semi-autonomous vehicles (AVs) are already hitting the road from automakers like Tesla and GM, fully autonomous cars may be here even sooner than originally expected. General Motors plans to offer a full AV by 2019 and Nissan Motor Co. is aiming to do the same in 2022.

### TRENDS & MARKET Analysis

In the U.S., Congress also is working on legislation to increase the number of AVs on public highways while establishing safety standards.

Nissan is taking a phased approach, introducing semi-autonomous features such as single-lane driving and auto parking to more models before launching true AVs. The company also plans to test an autonomous ride-hailing system in Yokohama, Japan this spring using two Leaf electric vehicles equipped with software from DeNA Co.

At a meeting at the Korea Semiconductor

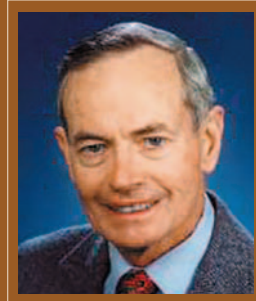
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### Technology Newsmaker

## Q&A

**ROBERT FENTON**

Professor Emeritus  
Ohio State University



How long do you think it will be before we see mass adoption of autonomous vehicles?



What did Fenton say? Continue reading online.

[Read full interview](#)

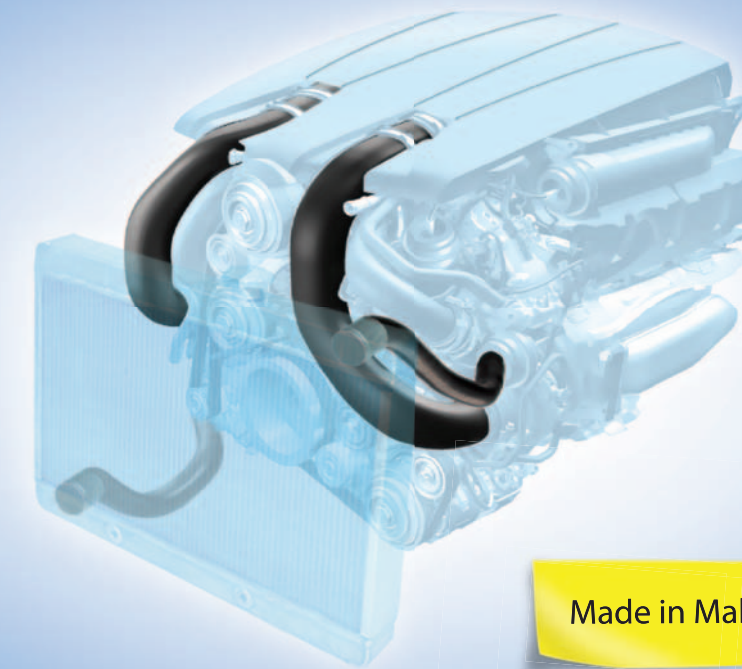
Industry Association, analysts with Mirae Asset Daewoo Securities stated that the AV car parts and technology market is currently \$12.2 billion, but will have a compound annual growth rate of 32 percent, reaching \$48.5 billion in 2021.

In the aftermarket, SEMA's Advanced Vehicle Technology Opportunity Study estimates the

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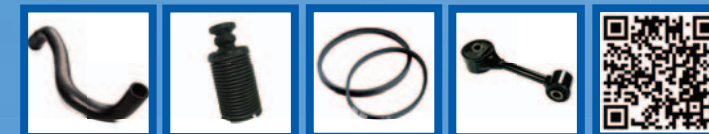


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potential market for retrofitting advanced driver assistance systems (ADAS) and connected vehicle technologies will grow from \$977 million to \$1.5 billion through 2021.

General Motors, meanwhile, believes the AV market could potentially be in the trillions, and claims it will launch autonomous vehicles at scale in cities by 2019.

Research firm IHS Markit agrees, predicting that AV revenues will reach \$1 trillion in 2040. China has made heavy investments in the technology, and could very well lead the market in adoption. The company forecasts sales of 21 million AVs in 2035. A similar study by Accenture and the Stevens Institute of Technology estimates that there will be as many as 23 million fully autonomous cars in the U.S. by 2035.

“Future mobility will connect and combine many different modes and technologies, and autonomous vehicles will play a central role,” said Jeremy Carlson, principal analyst at IHS Automotive. “IHS expects entirely new vehicle segments to be created, in addition to traditional vehicles adding autonomous capabilities. Consumers gain new choices in personal mobility to complement mass transit, and these new choices will increasingly use battery electric and other efficient means of propulsion.”

That growth will be partly dependent on falling costs. In December, Delphi Automotive CEO Kevin Clark announced that his company is targeting a 90 percent reduction in the cost of self-driving car solutions by 2025, falling from \$70,000-\$150,000 to just \$5,000.

Delphi changed its name to Aptiv in December and

“ General Motors plans to offer a full autonomous vehicle by 2019 and Nissan by 2022. ”

spun off its powertrain segment as Delphi Technologies. Aptiv will focus on self-driving and connected vehicles.

### Dozens of new models are due

Nissan’s efforts are part of a broader initiative it has undertaken with Renault and Mitsubishi called the Alliance 2022. The three automakers plan to share powertrain platforms and increase electric vehicle development in concert. They also plan to release 12 new pure electric vehicles by 2022, along with 40 vehicles that feature different levels of autonomy.

Nissan launched its first vehicle with autonomous features in the U.S. Its new Rogue will have an option to include ProPilot Assist, which will allow the car to automatically stay in a single lane, adapt speed to match traffic, and provide blind spot warnings. This potentially could introduce higher-level semi-autonomous features to a much wider driving population than Tesla’s AutoPilot (which is only available to a specific niche of upscale electric vehicle owners).

By 2020, the Alliance group plans to expand assisted driving technology to urban environments, followed by a full AV in 2022.

GM via its Cruise Automation subsidiary is working toward an entirely new business model built around driverless cars. GM’s plan is to offer AVs as the foundation for ride sharing services as vehicle ownership drops off among millennials and subsequent generations of potential drivers.

GM believes that eliminating the driver from the cost of operating ride-sharing services could cut those costs to \$1 or less. By doing so, such services could increase their share of vehicle miles traveled (VMT) in the U.S. from less than 1 percent to 20 percent or more of VMT. That could generate hundreds of billions of dollars in revenue and double-digit profits.

GM also has launched its Super Cruise semi-autonomous solution in its Cadillac CT6.

Uber has partnered with Volvo to create a fleet of self-driving vehicles for its ride-hailing service. Lyft, meanwhile, has forged an alliance with self-driving vehicle company Waymo.

In December, Ford announced it would build a fully autonomous vehicle. Ford also plans to supply the ride-sharing market, but strictly as a manufacturer. The company had previously announced it would have such a car by 2021, with availability for customers five to 10 years later.

Ford does not have immediate plans for semi-autonomous systems.

### New regulations on the way

While a handful of states in the U.S. have passed self-driving vehicle legislation, rules at the federal level are still in development. The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill in September that will allow up to 80,000 autonomous vehicles on the road. The bill lets the

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# VENDORS

## eBay Motors director explains website's aftermarket offerings

BY JAMES E. GUYETTE  
News Correspondent

In 1995 Pierre Omidyar, a French-born Iranian-American computer programmer, established eBay in his San Jose living room as an extension of his personal website. Initially known as AuctionWeb, the venture became wildly popular for connecting online sellers with online buyers.

### TRENDS & MARKET Analysis

eBay's many offshoots include its eBay Motors division, launched in 2000 with a focus on automotive goods and services.

"We are pairing machine learning with our strong product catalog to help you find exactly the parts you need to finish a repair or conduct an upgrade. It bundles listings together in a way that allows you to find everything you need to complete a project in a single listing page," explains senior product manager Miwa Takaki.

"While other online auto retailers may show you related parts, there's rarely a guarantee that those parts will fit your vehicle or even fit the same repair or project," according to Takaki. "But this new eBay

experience is tailored to show only recommendations for parts that fit your vehicle."

Marie Niewiroski, the director of eBay Motors, recently answered a series of questions posed by *Aftermarket Business World*, providing additional details about the site's automotive-oriented offerings:

**Q:** What does your Virtual Tech program entail?

**A:** With Virtual Tech, eBay Motors shoppers now have the option to purchase an add-on call with an Automotive Service Excellence (ASE) certified technician when they buy parts on the platform. Combined with their parts and accessories purchase, buyers can confidently complete their repair with support from technicians that have experience helping mechanics in need of assistance with an installation. The Virtual Tech program also includes 30-day access to a digital repair manual to reference when speaking with the technician.

**Q:** How does it benefit professional repairers?

**A:** The Virtual Tech offering targets all users – from novice to expert DIYers and even professional mechanics – that turn to eBay Motors when looking to make enhancements or repairs to their vehicle. The ASE certified technicians have experience providing customers

With Virtual Tech, eBay Motors parts buyers can buy an add-on call with an ASE-certified tech.

with up-front advice before the repair project has begun, walking them through a repair if they get stuck, or even troubleshooting a more complex problem.

**Q:** Is it online only, or can technicians also reach you by phone?

**A:** At this time, shoppers can only connect with a technician via phone. They simply purchase a Virtual Tech session on eBay Motors along with their other parts or accessories, then dial into the hotline to begin the conversation with a technician.

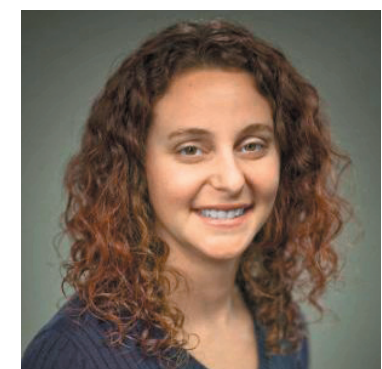
**Q:** How much does it cost?

**A:** Shoppers may purchase a 10-minute Virtual Tech session for \$19.95 and a 20-minute session for \$49.95.

**Q:** Does Virtual Tech also apply to parts providers, such as counter people at warehouse distributors and retail parts stores?

**A:** Virtual Tech is aimed more at helping shoppers with the actual repair rather than helping them to shop for parts. However, if a buyer

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MARIE NIEWIROSKI

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# LOGISTICS/CONNECTIVITY

## Wilson Auto Parts software upgrade improves inventory management

BY BRIAN ALBRIGHT  
Correspondent

Managing and balancing auto parts inventory among multiple locations is crucial to avoiding lost sales and obsolescence, and improving turns. Manually managing those inventory movements is not only time consuming, but can potentially lead to costly errors.

TRENDS & MARKET Analysis

Wilson Auto Parts, a five-location distributor based in New Jersey is upgrading its existing Epicor Prism business management solution with Epicor's Vision software to improve distribution and inventory management.

The company is a 20-year customer of Epicor. Although it had digitized a number of its processes, there was still a significant amount of manual labor involved in turning the sales and inventory data into actionable business intelligence. An audit of the company's daily operations found multiple areas that needed improvement. Team members were spending too much time engaged in manual processes that didn't generate any revenue.

"We've been in business for more than 40 years, and

“Team members were spending too much time engaged in manual processes that didn't generate revenue.”

solution because of the company's experience and the new features that were available.

"We've been with Epicor a long time, so I know that the support is there," he says. "Vision has really good inventory management and reporting features. We scan parts in and out of our warehouse, and Vision does a good job with managing and shifting inventory compared to other systems."

Once the new solution is in place, the company said it will be able to eliminate hours of manual processes involved in generating purchase orders, running reports, or dealing with invoices and statements. The software also will automate inventory balancing between locations, which will not only save time, but should also improve sales and increase inventory turns.

### Manual efforts slow operations

Currently, Barroso converts the Microsoft Word-based inventory reports he can get from Prism into an Excel spreadsheet report, which can take hours to complete.

"We have five warehouses, so there is a lot of overstock," Barroso says. ...CONTINUE READING □

### Technology Newsmaker

### Q&A

SUSAN BEARDSLEE  
Senior Analyst, ABI Research



Q Why is the "Uberization" of freight important, and what types of companies are using these services?

A What did Beardslee say? Continue reading online. [Read full interview](#)

we do a lot of things the 'old school' way," says Nuno Barroso, general manager at Wilson Auto Parts. "Prism was our first and so far our only business system. We outsource parts from vendors, and it takes a lot of time to manage purchase orders and run reports. The reports have to be custom made and the existing system had some limitations there."

Barroso investigated a number of different software products, but ultimately decided to upgrade the Epicor

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# VENDORS

## BMW, John Deere to grow global construction vehicle marketplace

BY JAMES E. GUYETTE  
News Correspondent

**B**MW is more closely associated with cars, motorcycles and the back stretch at Nürburgring than a farmer's back forty – but BMW's Designworks subsidiary is collaborating with John Deere to reap the latest in vehicle engineering innovations and apply them to Deere's lines of agricultural and construction equipment.

**TRENDS & MARKET Analysis**

Other manufacturers in this field also are sowing technological advances. In September the London-based CNH Industrial, with operations in 180 nations, unveiled a New Holland-branded concept tractor that runs on biomethane gas. When production of the engine system eventually comes to fruition farms could be fully self-sustaining and energy-independent for their vehicle fueling needs as the gas can be rendered onsite from animal waste and post-harvest discarded vegetation.

With locations in Munich, Shanghai and California, Designworks' longstanding partnership with Deere has

“BMW is collaborating with John Deere to apply vehicle engineering innovations to agricultural equipment.”

those and pull them back into the present and possibly implement them on existing products today,” explains Deere engineering manager Robert Moore.

“BMW is continuously working on innovations to headline the radical change in our future mobility,” says Adrian van Hooydonk, BMW's senior vice president of design. “Through Designworks we are able to share knowledge and inspire change and transformation in other industries, which is important not only with regards to product design or connectivity, but especially when it comes to sustainable solutions for the future.”

“Designing highly complex machinery requires a deep technological understanding,” concurs Designworks President Oliver Heilmer. “Ever since we conducted our first H Crawler project for John Deere in 1996, the foundation for success between our companies has been the continuous sharing of knowledge and experiences, along with a constant fostering of a shared design culture.”

Heilmer points out that “regardless of the industry, as we look to the future we face more technological and digitalization challenges being balanced with a clean **CONTINUE READING ONLINE** □

Vendor Newsmaker

Q&A

**ROB INFANTINO**  
Founder and CEO, Openbay



**Q** What benefits do shops obtain through Openbay's partnership with eBay Motors?

**A** What did Infantino say? [Continue reading online.](#) [Read full interview](#)

recently resulted in the rollout of what they are calling the “Fixstern Backhoe of the Future,” estimated to be a decade or so away from coming to market.

“Fixstern” means “fixed star” in German, reflecting a united identity based on perfecting a holistic, visionary and pioneering approach to engineering and design.

“Along the way, as we continue to solve problems, identify new processes/new technologies, we can pick

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# Careful repair planning improves **WORK FLOW, REDUCES CHAOS**

**A**fter the estimate has been completed, the vehicle has been dropped off for repair, and the disassembly and blueprint process is completed, it's time to plan the repair.

This important step often is missed because the work order is handed to a technician like a bag going through airport security. You put the bag on the conveyor belt of the screener and hope it comes out the other end without any problems to slow you down.

A simple process of reviewing the repair order to see what is required and determining which step in the repair process should happen first will eliminate the "hope" that the repair goes smoothly.

Some repairs are very simple with only a couple steps in the process while others can be quite complex. Reviewing those steps, organizing the repair process and communicating the repair plan will prevent repair dead time.

Look around your shop right now and see how many repairs are in the dead zone because you are waiting on a sublet vendor, the frame machine or mechanical work. This chaos can all be prevented through repair planning.

The repair plan begins after the vehicle blueprinting process where all damage and repair needs have been identified. Using a vehicle that needs a left rear quarter panel with some minor suspension damage as an example, let's review the steps needed to complete this repair.

1. Body repair
2. Refinish operations
3. Remove back glass
4. Reinstall back glass
5. Replace L/R lower control arm
6. 4-wheel alignment
7. Set-up and measure
8. Align rear quarter

This repair requires eight basic steps. If they're not accomplished in the correct order this repair could cause chaos in the shop and put a vehicle in the dead zone.

Most management systems allow you to establish a repair plan by moving repair steps into a logical order. Some are more rigid while others offer flexibility in posi-

How many repairs are delayed waiting on a sublet vendor, the frame machine or mechanical work?

tioning the steps. The more flexible the system, the easier it will be to establish an accurate repair plan.

Looking at all the steps required, we can put them in a logical sequence creating a smooth repair plan.

1. Set-up and measure
2. Align rear quarter
3. Remove back glass
4. Body repair
5. Replace L/R lower control arm
6. 4-wheel alignment
7. Refinish operations
8. Reinstall back glass

Once the repair plan is established you will be able to determine time lines for each step based on the repair time allowed. This will allow you to schedule the glass removal and reinstallation, mechanical repairs, alignment and even the frame machine at the  
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**JOHN SHOEMAKER**  
Business Development Manager  
BASF North America

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Drop scripted interview questions to learn more about applicants

### Mark Smith

Life on the road is filled with hot plates and ill fates

### Jerry Hutcheson

Cybersecurity is a people issue, not a tech problem

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# Drop scripted interview questions TO LEARN MORE ABOUT APPLICANTS

Are standardized job interviews a disservice to both the hiring company and to the job seeker? After a recent video job interview with a big-box auto parts retailer, I was inspired by our choreographed exchange to explore a more meaningful way for employers to bind an authentic hire.

After all, both sides share some legitimate concerns: Will they like working with each other? Can the employer's needs be met?

After scouring multiple career advice columns, I've identified four effective approaches that hiring managers can use during interviews. These approaches – and the questions they generate – also can help job seekers gain a better sense of what potential employers value.

**Strategy 1: Involve Employees.** Many pairs of eyes are better than one during an interview because larger groups often produce a diversity of opinions about the candidate. This process is also more democratic. Thankfully, my interviewer went the extra mile by introducing her team to me.

All four of us enjoyed the benefit of sizing each other up as potential teammates who might be working with each other every day. Had only one person conducted this meeting, his or her biases and blind spots could

have impaired the evaluation by overlooking my signs of curiosity, engagement, or interest.

A *Harvard Business Review* article noted that by encouraging peer interviews and letting team members vote on who gets hired, companies can ensure that colleagues “will take more ownership of the hire and have reasons to help that person succeed.”

**Strategy 2: Make a real connection.** Closed-ended questions like “Tell me about yourself” are unproductive because most prospects – myself included – stress over saying the right words. During my interview, I responded to this traditional question by reciting my lines for wanting to become a category manager. Although I'd hoped to hit the target, their disinterested stares over the monitor signaled a dead-end silence.

In an article published by the *Harvard Business Review*, one human resources manager confided that interrogations don't work for either party. She explained, “If candidates perceive a hostile environment, they go into self-preservation mode.”

Instead, to put job applicants at ease, she often asks about their hobbies or interests, which gives her a snapshot of their outlook. For instance, one candidate recounted a recent trip to Asia, which conveyed to her

Closed-ended questions such as “Tell me about yourself” are unproductive.

a sense of how receptively the applicant adapts to different environments.

**Strategy 3: Ask unusual questions.** Aside from trumpeting practical skills, I wondered why nobody in our meeting spoke about natural abilities or inner callings. To me, resumes limit our ability to reveal who we are as people.

Imagine hearing this type of question during an interview: “What kind of animal would you be, and why?” *The New York Times* “Corner Office” column observed that during one interview, a candidate answered by choosing a lion. The predator answer suggested that this individual would be compatible with a sales position, whereas someone who selected a social animal, like a dog, might be a better fit for team environments.

*The New York Times* also proposed an alternative to this common question: “What is your greatest weakness?”

Seasoned contenders who ...CONTINUE READING ▣



ALAN R. SEGAL  
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# Life on the road is filled with **HOT PLATES AND ILL FATES**



I am rudely reminded that my maturity presents me with a new set of challenges when traveling.



**W**hen I first started my career in the automotive aftermarket, I could go for several days with little sleep. I would drive countless miles, work until all hours of the night and do it all over again the next day.

I could “set ‘em up, knock ‘em down” and sing “It’s Closing Time” with what I was told to be the voice of an angel. I could slurp the foulest cup of gruel and sustain myself with any type of exotic cuisine only to awaken the next morning with little disdain for the treasonous acts that my body had endured the prior evening.

That was my life as a young sales rep. It didn’t happen like that every night on the road, but it did happen. Everyone who has lived life on the road has a few of those stories.

That was then and this is now. Fast forward 25 years and here I am again living life on the road. Albeit a mature life on the road. I am rudely reminded that my maturity presents me with a new set of challenges. My tastes have become somewhat more refined, my indulgences far fewer and much less tolerable, and my appreciation for simple pleasures eagerly anticipated. Some might say expected.

My tale of woe highlights only two simple, yet expected, modicums of the sublime. A decent meal and a clean bed. My neglected youthful judgment and its penalties, regardless of the fables they conjure, are fresh enough in my memory, and that’s how I want to keep them – a memory.

Now I like a clean bed, a decent meal and sufficient sleep. I’ve danced with Montezuma and tempted God. At my age, there is only so much Pepto Bismol can cure, and I imagine that God is tired of my antics. These last few months have made me realize good food and clean sheets are tough to find.

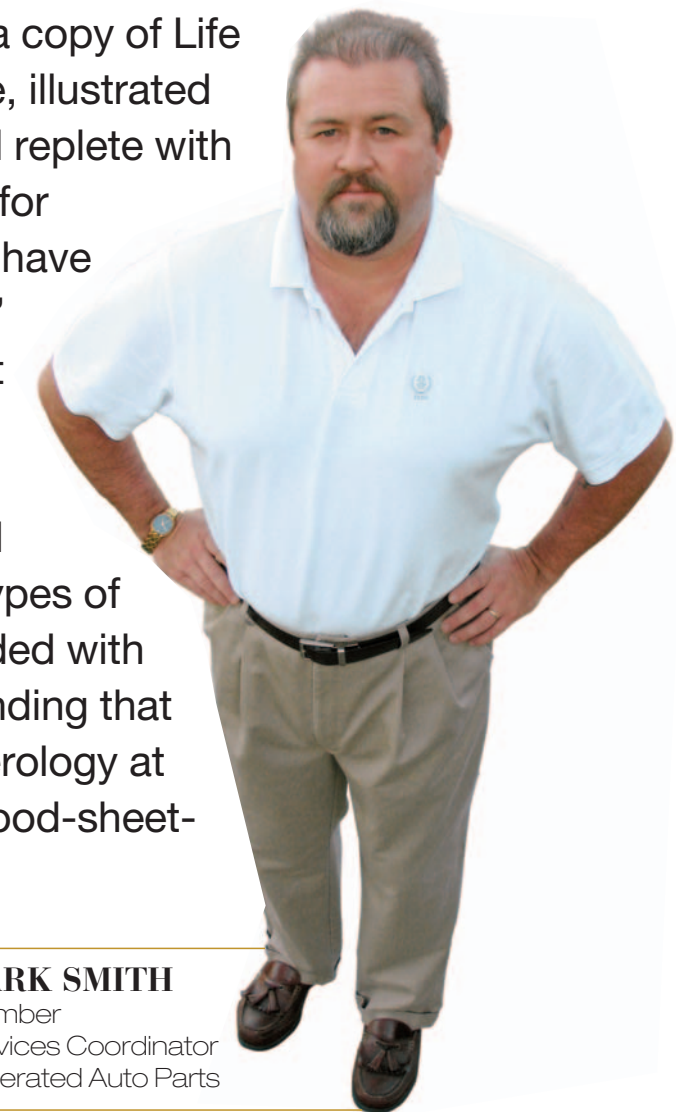
After a recent seven-hour drive, I was looking forward to checking into my hotel. I have discount cards, membership cards and reward cards for every hotel, motel, airline and fuel station in North America. It’s a new thing for me, that’s how long I’ve been away from living on the road. I qualify for an AARP card, but my ego has kept me from mailing the application.

After scoping out my surroundings near the hotel, I decided to eat at a Mexican restaurant near my reserved room. Being convenient is a much higher standard for variant selection these days. Plus, it was Mexican food,

and I might need to get to my room quickly.

In typical fashion, I was seated and handed a menu that more resembled a copy of Life magazine. It was huge, illustrated with many photos and replete with 441 entrée selections for combo meals. I could have read “War and Peace” more quickly than that menu. Oddly enough, the square-root of 441 is 21, which coincided with the 21 different types of tacos available. I nodded with a newfound understanding that there was some numerology at work behind the plywood-sheet-sized menu.

I always feel foolish ordering  
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**MARK SMITH**  
Member  
Services Coordinator  
Federated Auto Parts



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# Cybersecurity is a people issue, **NOT A TECHNOLOGY PROBLEM**

I recently had the opportunity to interview Eric Cole, Ph.D., one of the world's leading cybersecurity experts who has been interviewed by 60 Minutes, CNN and The History Channel. He also was a commissioner on President Obama's Commission on Cybersecurity.

We had a fascinating conversation and it yielded great insights into why we are in the cybersecurity situation we are in right now, and what we can do about it. Here are a few of the highlights.

- Why do cybersecurity breaches keep happening? Cole said, "As humans we are in the position of thinking that it will not happen to me. We do not get into a car and think there is a good chance I get into a crash today. We just go about our business and kind of put it out of our minds." Unfortunately, this is what the cybercriminals are waiting for. They are waiting for us to drop our guard, to not expect anything to happen. And then they strike. The lesson is get prepared today, don't wait.
- I asked him about his stint at the Central Intelligence Agency and how it differed from corporate America. He said, "it was unusual in that critical systems maintained an air gap (*editor's note: an air gap is when a system*

*does not have an electrical connection to the outside*) to protect them from hacking. But as our recent experience with the NSA breaches we see that this is not always successful." Sometimes hackers manage to get the data out anyway. But the point is valuable. There may be times in critical corporate environments when an air gap is necessary, and should be considered. This would be at the high end of protection strategies. Another valuable lesson, cybersecurity is not a technology problem, it is a business and people issue.

- We talked about the biggest challenges for corporate America in cybersecurity. "It was to focus on some core areas of your business. Things like asset management, and document control and change control. If these areas are not addressed, then cybersecurity policies and procedures layered over them will be ineffective." As I have written before, cybersecurity is a game of the basics of common sense business. If you get these areas of your house in order you will be able to create a much stronger cybersecurity posture. The emphasis is in your company's business processes.
- We talked about the Internet of Things (IoT) and he believes that "IOT has too much focus on functionality

Eric Cole was a commissioner on President Obama's Commission on Cybersecurity.

and not security. We are so busy trying to get as much functionality in as small a package as possible we lose site of the security. This leads to serious consequences down the road. We will have to double focus on security from the beginning and build it into our systems and products." This goes double for the automotive industry where our systems control 3,000-pound vehicles moving at high speeds. So make sure you are starting with the end in mind when it comes to cybersecurity.

- Cole said he believes "that all disciplines will have a specialty in the field of cybersecurity. Engineers, lawyers, doctors, designers all will have to deal with their field and cybersecurity concurrently. Our ability to do these two functions will make us incredibly valuable and the career prospects are huge." Ask yourselves what niches in your field could benefit from a
- ...CONTINUE READING** ▣



**JERRY HUTCHESON**  
Owner  
Cybercreed Consulting

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# QUALITY IS KING

AUTO PARTS RESELLERS CITE QUALITY AS TOP NEED OF PROFESSIONAL CUSTOMERS

BY BRUCE ADAMS | Managing Editor

**A**utomotive parts resellers say that quality is the No. 1 need of their professional customers, but price is the No. 1 need of their do-it-yourself (DIY) customers, according to the *Aftermarket Business World* 2018 Reseller Study.

In the annual survey conducted by the magazine in 2018, 38 percent of resellers said that part quality is the top need of its professional customers, while 23 percent said part availability is the top need and 18 percent said the part's OEM form fit and function is the top need of professional buyers.

This is consistent with last year's study, in which 36 percent of resellers cited quality as the No. 1 need of professional customers, 20 percent cited availability and 14 percent said OEM form, fit and function was the top need.

This year's study results also followed the same pattern of responses received last year about DIY customers. In this year's study, 53 percent of resellers said that price was the No. 1 need of DIY customers and 21 percent said availability was the No. 1 need. Those two items also were ranked in the top two in last year's reseller study when 58 percent of respondents said price was the No. 1 need of DIY customers and 17 percent said availability was the No. 1 need.

In the 2018 study, 38 percent of resellers said their sales

of the products surveyed increased 1 percent to 10 percent in 2017, while 35 percent said sales stayed the same. Some 13 percent of resellers said their sales of those products declined in 2017.

When it comes to 2018 sales expectations, 49 percent of resellers said they expect to increase sales 1 percent to 10 percent of those same products in 2018, while 31 percent said they expect sales will be flat and 7 percent expect to see a sales decline.

For 2018 gross margin expectations, 48 percent of resellers expect their margins to increase 1 percent to 10 percent, 32 percent of resellers expect margins to hold steady and 5 percent of respondents expect their gross margins to decrease in 2018.

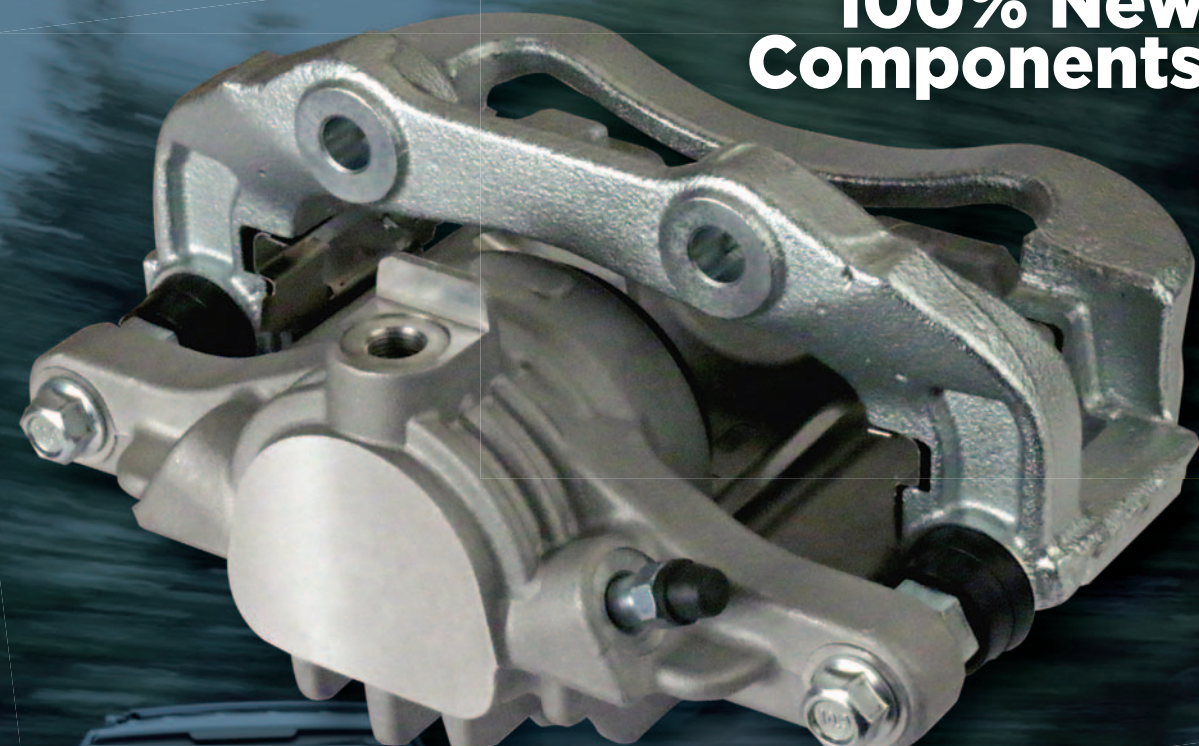
Some 51 percent of resellers said the majority of their parts inventory is national brand products while 15 percent said the majority of their parts inventory is private label and the remaining 34 percent said their inventory is evenly split between national brand and private label products.

Methodology: The Reseller Product Study was fielded to readers of *Aftermarket Business World* via email. Survey results are intended to show general market trends, not statistical certainties. □

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# Auxiliary Lighting

## Needs of professional customers

Quality	37%
OEM form, fit & function	21%
Availability	23%

## Needs of DIY customers

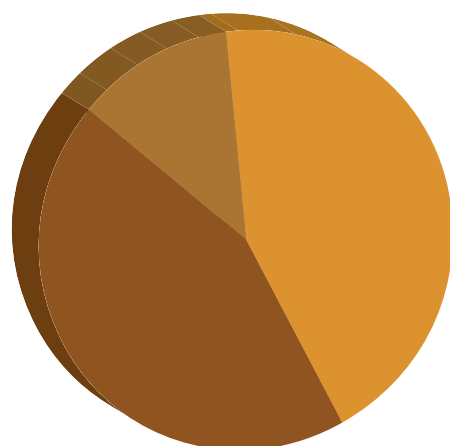
Price	54%
Availability	17%
OEM form, fit & function	13%

## 2017 auxiliary lighting sales

44%  
Increased

44%  
Held Steady

12%  
Decreased



**49%** of resellers report that they make no auxiliary lighting sales online.

# QUALITY IS KING

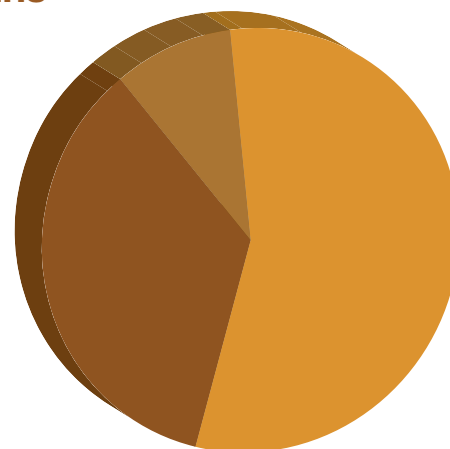
**45%** report the majority of their auxiliary lighting inventory is national brand products.

## Expected 2018 gross margins

56%  
To Increase

35%  
To Hold Steady

9%  
To Decrease



## 2018 auxiliary lighting sales expectations

To increase 1-10%	49%
To increase 11-20%	16%
To hold steady	30%
To decrease 1-20%	5%

## Expected 2018 auxiliary lighting turns

1-2	45%
3-4	27%
5-8	19%
9-14	9%

**73%**  
turn to

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to get news and information on auxiliary lighting trends and developments

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# Brakes

## Needs of professional customers

Price	17%
Quality	43%
Availability	18%

## Needs of DIY customers

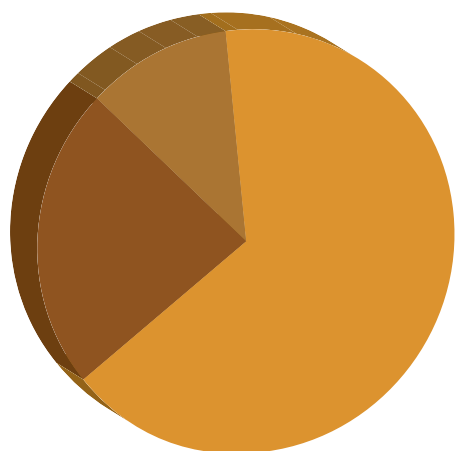
Price	47%
Availability	25%
OEM form, fit & function	11%

## 2017 brake sales

66%  
Increased

23%  
Held Steady

11%  
Decreased



56% of resellers report they make none of their brake sales online.



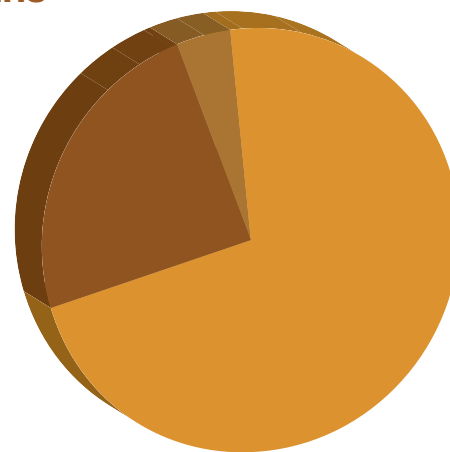
47% report the majority of their brake inventory is national brand products.

## Expected 2018 gross margins

72%  
To Increase

24%  
To Hold Steady

4%  
To Decrease



## 2018 brake sales expectations

To increase 1-10%	53%
To increase 11-20%	18%
To hold steady	22%
To decrease	7%

## Expected 2018 brake turns

1-2	21%
3-4	34%
5-6	23%
7-10	14%

79%  
turn to

## INDUSTRY PUBLICATIONS

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# Fuel Pumps

## Needs of professional customers

Quality	34%
Availability	29%
OEM for, fit & function	19%

## Needs of DIY customers

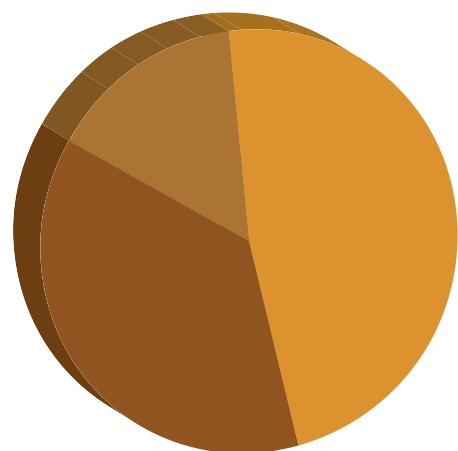
Price	58%
Availability	22%
Quality	9%

## 2017 fuel pump sales

**48%**  
Increased

**37%**  
Held Steady

**15%**  
Decreased



**58%** of resellers report they make none of their fuel pump sales online.

# QUALITY IS KING

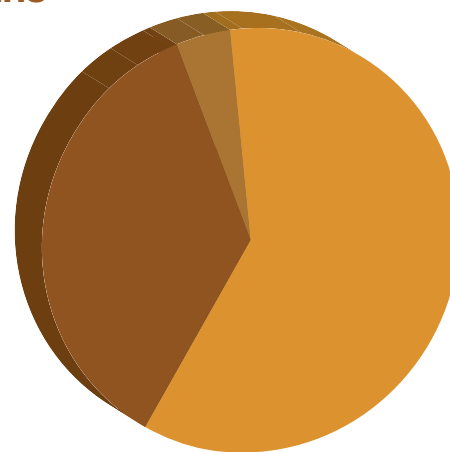
**65%** report the majority of fuel pump inventory is national brand products.

## Expected 2018 gross margins

**60%**  
To Increase

**36%**  
To Hold Steady

**4%**  
To Decrease



## 2018 fuel pump sales expectations

To increase 1-10%	44%
To increase 11-20%	5%
To hold steady	43%
To decrease	8%

## Expected 2018 fuel pump turns

1-2	61%
3-4	23%
5-8	9%
9-12	5%

**75%**  
turn to

## INDUSTRY PUBLICATIONS

to get news and information on fuel pump trends and developments

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