

# THE GREENSHEET

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### Inside Reports

F-M Global Aftermarket Sales Fell 17% In Q2 .....	Page 2
Virtual Aftermarket eForum Speakers Unveiled .....	Page 3
Uni-Select's Q2 U.S. Organic Sales Unchanged .....	Page 3
TRW Announces 14-Million Share Public Offering .....	Page 3
'Take-Out' Program Lets Clients Pick P.R. Services ....	Page 4
Ronn Motors Inks Ronnzoil Sales & Marketing Pact ..	Page 4
ISO Launches NMVTIS Reporting Service .....	Page 5
Metaldyne Reaches Deal To Sell Most Of Its Assets ....	Page 5
Thumbs Up/Thumbs Down.....	Page 6
<i>Perspective: What Shops Expect From Suppliers .....</i>	<i>Page 7</i>

### ADVANCE AUTO PARTS PAYS \$40,000 TO SETTLE DISCRIMINATION SUIT

Roanoke, VA-based **Advance Auto Parts** has agreed to pay \$40,000 to settle a racial discrimination suit filed in 2008 by the **U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)** on the behalf of **Mathew Osley**, the only black operations manager at a company facility in Kutztown, PA. The EEOC says it filed suit against Advance after attempting to reach a voluntary settlement out of court.

The suit claimed that Advance has engaged in unlawful employment practices in Kutztown since December 2006. Osley, who began working at the Kutztown facility in 2005, was the first shift operations manager and Kutztown's only black operations manager. **In December 2006, according to the EEOC's suit, one of Osley's supervisors (then an assistant general manager) began using racially offensive language toward Osley**, such as warning Osley that he would be "cracking the whip" on Osley *[Continued on Page 2]*

### A NEW PLANT FOR CENTRIC PARTS

**Centric Parts** has moved its brake pad operations into a 40,000-square-foot assembly plant in Carson, CA. According to company president **Dan Lelechuk**, current and expected growth in the Centric's brake pad sales led to the decision to move production into a stand-alone facility. Centric currently operates multiple warehouse and manufacturing facilities, totaling 473,000 square feet, and employs more than 500 people.

### SEC INVESTIGATING FORMER CFO OF CLEVELAND-BASED HAWK CORP.

The staff of the SEC has notified **Joseph Levanduski**, the now-former vice president and CFO of **Hawk Corp.**, that it intends to recommend civil action be brought against Levanduski for alleged violations of several securities laws. He is accused of aiding and abetting violations of, among other things, provisions against insider trading. The SEC has not taken action against Levanduski. It has only notified him that action may be taken and given Levanduski the opportunity to present his side of what happened.

While Hawk itself has not received such a notification, there can be no assurance that the SEC will not issue one to the friction materials specialist in connection with this investigation.

Hawk stated in a recent press release its belief that the violations alleged to have been committed by Levanduski relate to events under investigation by the SEC and the Department of Justice dating back to June 2006. Hawk stated that it has cooperated fully with the inquiries and that it has no reason to believe either probe will result in a restatement of its financial results for any period.

**Levanduski stepped down as Hawk's vice president and CFO one day after he was notified by the SEC that it has begun investigating him.** He continues to serve as an executive officer in a non-financial reporting capacity as senior vice president of administration and director of corporate development.

### MPA'S SALES PICKED UP IN JUNE

While sales were down through the first two months of the fiscal first quarter ended June 30, 2009, sales returned in June, leading **Motorcar Parts of America (MPA)** to report essentially break-even year-over-year net sales of \$32.69 million. According to a filing with the SEC, the company's sales were down in April and May due, in part, to an inventory reduction program initiated by one of MPA's largest customers and "an understanding" with a customer to delay shipments because of "its then-uncertain financial future." June sales were not affected by this, so MPA's sales to these customers for the quarter were only slightly lower. *[Continued on Page 2]*

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## ADVANCE PAYS \$40,000 TO SETTLE DISCRIMINATION SUIT . . . [Continued from Page 1]

and remarking that Osley was “more articulate than most” black individuals. Osley reportedly advised the supervisor in question that his comments were racially offensive and disparaging. The suit claimed that the supervisor responded with a memo indicating that he and Osley’s discussion would be used as a “pre-disciplinary tool.”

In March 2007, the supervisor was promoted to general manager, placing him in charge of the entire Kutztown facility. Following this promotion, the suit claimed, the supervisor subjected Osley to increased scrutiny and undermined Osley’s managerial authority in managers meetings and in front of subordinates. **The EEOC’s suit stated that Osley complained of racial discrimination “several times” to the onsite human resources manager and another supervisor but that the company took no action to address Osley’s complaints or to investigate them.**

**According to the suit, 10 days after Osley complained to the general manager about racial discrimination, Osley received a negative performance review** and was later put on a 30-day “performance plan” that contained what the suit called unreasonable and excessive performance requirements. Osley later left his job with Advance.

Advance, in addition to the \$40,000 settlement payment, also must train all managers and supervisors on employee rights and employer obligations under federal law. The matter is pending judicial approval.

## MPA’S SALES PICKED UP IN JUNE; JULY HELD STRONG . . . [Continued from Page 1]

A decrease in sales to the company’s other major existing customers was partially offset by sales to new customers that came as a result of MPA’s acquisitions. **Selwyn Joffe — MPA’s chairman, president and CEO — said that a significant pick-up in June sales from existing customers gives management optimism that MPA’s base revenue is very strong.** “Sales in the first month of the current quarter continued to be strong,” Joffe said. “The volume of anticipated business from existing and new customers is encouraging. Enhanced utilization of manufacturing capacity and our ability to leverage the company’s low-cost manufacturing structure and produce quality products are key components of the company’s growth strategy.”

Joffe noted that increased absorption of fixed costs from anticipated new business will enhance operating margins and allow MPA to improve earnings performance for the remaining quarters of the year. He added that the company expects further balance sheet improvements in fiscal 2010 and positive cash flow, supported by increased sales volume and an improved factoring environment for key customers.

## FEDERAL-MOGUL’S GLOBAL AFTERMARKET SALES FELL 17% IN Q2

While **Federal-Mogul Corp.** saw its net sales decrease 34.6 percent to \$1.30 billion in the second quarter of 2009 as global automotive markets remained challenging, global aftermarket sales fared better — falling 17 percent to \$626 million on a year-over-year basis. Global aftermarket volumes decreased in all regions because of a combination of factors, including reduced consumer spending and unfavorable currency movements.

Global aftermarket margin fell from \$169 million, or 22.4 percent of sales, to \$130 million, or 20.8 percent of sales. Operational EBITDA (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortization) decreased 24.4 percent, going from \$119 million a year ago to \$90 million in the three months ended June 30, 2009.

Overall, Federal-Mogul’s net income fell from \$89.60 million to \$3.00 million.

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## LINE-UP OF VIRTUAL AFTERMARKET eFORUM SPEAKERS UNVEILED

The following speakers have been announced for the **Virtual Aftermarket eForum** scheduled for Wednesday, Sept. 30:

- **Jay Yanko**, director of global data synchronization at **Edgenet**, will discuss multi-enterprise data management in the aftermarket. His talk will emphasize that, in today's economy, businesses cannot afford to miss opportunities to use product information to drive down costs, strengthen customer relations and sell more. Yanko's presentation will be followed by a live Q&A session.
- **Jonathan Ressler**, a social media expert from **Brand Noise Reduction Laboratory Inc.**, will talk about demystifying social media from a strategic marketing perspective. With a background in guerrilla, stealth and entertainment marketing and social media, Ressler will discuss how brands can leverage social media to meet their objectives.
- **GCommerce** President & CEO **Steve Smith** will discuss automated purchasing over the Internet, its impact and its cost. His presentation, "Internet Data Exchange: Pointing EDI in the Right Direction," will cover an approach to unlocking the ROI and business improvements that can be found in automating document exchange over the Internet.
- **Max Buchanan**, director of sales – heavy duty and automotive at **Datalliance**, will talk about collaborating to optimize inventory results. Buchanan's presentation will explore the risks and rewards of collaborative and vendor-managed practices, as well as cite the ROI and business benefits realized by those who practice collaborative inventory planning.

The eForum will be conducted completely on the web through a virtual event portal powered by **ON24**, a webcasting and virtual events company. Starting at 9:30 a.m., the day-long event will include these live presentations and discussions, as well as networking opportunities and a vendor trade show. And, the entire program will be available on-demand for six months after the live event. For more information, visit [www.aftermarketeforum.com](http://www.aftermarketeforum.com).

## UNI-SELECT'S SECOND-QUARTER U.S. ORGANIC SALES UNCHANGED

Due in large part to acquisitions made in previous quarters and currency rate variations, **Uni-Select** saw its sales increase 20.9 percent to US\$359.01 million and its net earnings increase 21.4 percent to US\$14.39 million. However, just stripping out the impact of exchange rate variations, the Boucherville, QC-based distributor's sales increase comes in at only 12.8 percent and its net income growth comes in at only 15.6 percent. **The positive impact of acquisitions can be seen in the company's U.S. automotive group.**

Automotive Group USA reported second-quarter sales of US\$225.68 million. That's up 43.6 percent over the previous year. Yet, if you take away the favorable impact of exchange rate variations and acquisitions, U.S. organic sales are unchanged year-over-year.

## TRW AUTOMOTIVE ANNOUNCES 14-MILLION SHARE PUBLIC OFFERING

Livonia, MI-based **TRW Automotive Holdings Corp.** has launched an underwritten registered public offering of 14 million shares of its common stock. The underwriters have been granted a 30-day option to purchase as many as 2.1 million additional shares of TRW common stock to cover over-allotments, if any. The company is expected to receive more than \$234 million in net proceeds from the sale of its common stock, plus any proceeds received from the exercise by the underwriters of their over-allotment option. TRW intends to use the proceeds of the offering to repay borrowings.

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## 'TAKE-OUT' PROGRAM LETS CLIENTS PICK SPECIFIC P.R. SERVICES

**Eastman & Accomplices**, a Laguna Niguel, CA-based marketing and public relations agency, has introduced a program called **Take-Out P.R.** that allows clients to choose only the services they need. This a-la-carte approach is designed for budget-conscious customers who don't want to incur the cost of retainers or billable hours. Instead, clients pick out specific items, like press releases, with the client's own staff handling the other elements of a program, such as distribution.

"I was having a hard time getting business, and I just came across with the idea. I had several clients who were on retainer, and they dropped me," said **Christine Eastman**, a partner in the company. "I love to write, but I didn't like to do all the busy work associated with the business, such as mailing and follow-up calls. I could have them do that work. They can save money, and I wouldn't have to do that part of the job that I hate."

"The response has been great. I had several people say 'I can't believe no one has done this before,'" Eastman added. "I am probably making a lot agencies out there angry."

Eastman runs the agency along with her husband, **Corey**. "Accomplices" are hired on a when-needed basis. The company, which specializes in motorsports operations, is nine years old. "I was just looking at what was happening economically and decided I'd better find a way to go with the flow instead of fighting it," Eastman said. "Of course, this model doesn't work for all companies, but it sure seems like it could for plenty of them out there."

## RONN MOTORS ANNOUNCES RONNZOIL SALES & MARKETING DEAL

The **Ronn Motor Co.** of Horseshoe Bay, TX, has awarded **World Wide Green Lubricants (WWGL)** the exclusive marketing rights for all **Ronzoil** products sold through the **Ronzoil Premium Green Oil Club (RPGOC)** in the United States and Canada on passenger vehicles under 2 tons, including government and commercial vehicles. RMC's proprietary Ronzoil line consists of biodegradable motor oils, fluids and additives that have been designed for the automotive chemicals aftermarket.

Under the terms of this sales and marketing agreement, RMC will receive a royalty of \$0.50 to \$3.00 for each gallon of Ronzoil product marketed and sold through the Ronzoil Premium Green Oil Club, which will be managed by WWGL. **The club will be marketed to individuals through automotive dealerships and lube centers.** WWGL expects to begin operations within 90 days, as executives complete the development of proprietary software applications, call center logistics and operations, as well as marketing and sales material.

All Ronzoil products sold through the WWGL network of lube centers and dealerships will include a 150,000-mile extended engine warranty, expanding to a lifetime warranty as the program builds, expands and progresses. **WWGL projects Ronzoil sales will begin at 50,000 gallons a month with total annual sales in the first year approaching 2 million gallons.** Projected sales by WWGL by the end of the second year show an annual run rate of 8.9 million gallons, third year 16.8 million gallons, and, by the end of the fourth year, 27.8 million gallons. These projections do not include sales to federal, state or local government fleets.

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## ISO LAUNCHES NMVTIS REPORTING SERVICE FOR AUTO RECYCLERS

Jersey City, NJ-based **ISO** has launched a new service to help auto recyclers, dismantlers, shredders and junk yards meet a new requirement to report salvage vehicles to the **National Motor Vehicle Title Information System (NMVTIS)**.

NMVTIS was established in 1992 to assist in efforts to prevent the introduction or reintroduction of stolen and salvaged motor vehicles into interstate commerce. NMVTIS is intended to provide authorized recipients with instant and reliable access to the motor vehicle titling information maintained by states. In January 2009, requirements for reporting information on salvage vehicles to NMVTIS were implemented. Under the rule, recyclers, dismantlers, shredders and junk yards must report the intake, as well as the disposition, of salvage vehicles to NMVTIS.

ISO is an authorized data consolidator. Insurers, salvage companies, recyclers and junk yards can comply with NMVTIS requirements by reporting the required data to ISO's insurance claims database service, **ISO ClaimSearch**, and ISO ClaimSearch will report to NMVTIS on their behalf.

## METALDYNE REACHES A DEAL TO SELL MOST OF ITS ASSETS

After a series of bids and what management called better bids, **Metaldyne Corp.** (Plymouth, MI) has a deal in place to sell substantially all of its businesses to **MD Investors Corp.** The sale would involve the powertrain, balance shaft module, tubular products and chassis assets. MD Investors was the highest and best bid at an auction held Aug. 6. MD Investors is a new company formed by a coalition of Metaldyne's existing term lenders led by **The Carlyle Group** (a private equity firm) and **Solus Alternative Asset Management LP**. Metaldyne filed for bankruptcy protection on May 27.

**PEOPLE WATCHING . . .** Roanoke, VA-based **Advance Auto Parts** has appointed former **Best Buy** executive **David Voight** as its vice president of finance. Voight most recently was vice president of finance – domestic channels at Best Buy. Voight will be based in Minneapolis. . . . Cleveland-based **Hickok** has selected Kirin Smith — co-founder and managing partner at the **Glaubman, Rosenberg & Robotti Fund LP** — to fill a vacant seat on its board of directors. Smith is a Hickok shareholder, holding some 78,600 shares of the company's stock directly or indirectly. . . . **James Graninger**, vice president – diagnostics business unit at **Robert Bosch**, has been appointed to the **Equipment & Tool Institute (ETI)** board of directors, filling an open seat expiring in 2010. **Tim Morgan**, global director of technical training at **Celette**, has been appointed to fill an open seat expiring in 2012.

## NEWS BRIEFS . . . Federal-Mogul Corp.

(Southfield, MI) has cut some 11,000 jobs over the past 12 months. That's a 22-percent reduction in headcount. . . . Elyria, OH-based **Bendix Commercial Vehicle Systems** has re-launched its **Bendix Webshop** website for direct Bendix aftermarket customers. Among the enhancements made to the site, [www.bendix.biz](http://www.bendix.biz), is improved order-tracking. . . . **Project 1320**, a documentary series on the birth and growth of drag racing, has picked up another endorsement. This time, it's from the **Goodguys Rod & Custom Association** in Pleasanton, CA. . . . As part of its ongoing expansion, **The Car Domain Network** has selected **Focus Media & Marketing**, with offices in Chicago and Michigan, as its Midwest sales and marketing partner. The Car Domain Network operates a web community for auto enthusiasts with more than 2 million registered users, 700,000 custom ride profiles, and a motorsports library of 300,000-plus videos. The company operates more than 20 sites. . . . Representatives from **AutoZone**, **O'Reilly Auto Parts** and **Carquest** will discuss how to simplify and quicken the flow of data from suppliers to channel partners at the 2009 **MEMA Information Services Council Fall Conference**, which will be held Oct. 11-13 in Marco Island, FL. The conference is designed for aftermarket professionals whose responsibilities involve customer service, business support, e-commerce, information services, cataloging, forecasting and supply chain.

## Here's What You Missed 8/15/09 In Service Executive

- Tunex To Double Its Auto Service Franchises In 5 Years
- Monro Reports 6.2% Q1 Comp Sales Growth
- Cottman Testing Mobile Repair Service
- RepairPal Partnering With Customerlink
- Valvoline's Operating Income Spikes In June Quarter
- EcoSmart Lube Conversion To Use MicroGreen Filters
- Snap-on Tool Group Sales Decreased 12% In Second Quarter
- Danaher Mechanic's Tool Sales Were Down 12% In Q2
- Stanley Notes Stronger Mechanic's Tool Demand
- Impact Of Gas Price On Economy Car Demand Not Strong
- Leadership Changes At Ford's Customer Service Division
- Shops Ill At Ease With Private-Label Parts, Prefer OE
- ASA, Zurich North America Commercial Renew Agreement
- Consumer Reports To Emphasize Preventive Maintenance
- Point Of View: Study Results Are Unclear At Best

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# THUMBS UP/THUMBS DOWN

## RECESSION MAY BE ENDING BUT RECOVERY WILL TAKE MUCH LONGER



According to a monthly survey of economists published earlier this week by **Blue Chip Economic Indicators**, the recession will end this quarter but most of the economists surveyed see the recovery as more of a long-term effort. *The Wall Street Journal's* MarketWatch.com website reported that a panel of 51 economists predicts that the economy will contract 2.6 percent in 2009 and that gross domestic product will grow 2.3 percent in 2010. That's the median forecast. "About one-sixth of the group believes the recovery will be robust, resembling a V-shape chart, as it typically does after a deep recession. Another one-sixth believes the recovery will look like a W, with a further period of weakness next year after a period of strength over the final six months of 2009. The others — about two-thirds of the group — expect a U-shaped recovery, with below-trend growth until late next year. Consumer spending is likely to be weak through 2010, the economists said. Most of the forecasters look for subdued inflation and stubbornly high unemployment through the end of 2010. Specifically, the consumer price index is expected to rise 1.9 percent next year." Considering where we were about 9-10 months ago, even six months back, this is a favorable outlook from those one would consider in the know.

## FACTS DON'T SUPPORT AFTERMARKET ATTACKS ON CASH FOR CLUNKERS



Even after the Senate had already passed the second round of **Cash for Clunkers** funding, the folks at **AAIA** found it not only necessary to lobby publicly against the program but, in stating its case, seemed to fail to let the facts get in the way of a good argument. Now don't miss the point; there are reasonable concerns to be raised concerning the **Car Allowance Rebate System** that has significantly stimulated new car sales. But, some of the points being made in AAIA's Aug. 7 release seem to miss the target when it comes to facts. For example, the release stated that the majority of vehicles being traded in are domestic, and the majority of new vehicles being sold are foreign. Yet, according to numbers from **Edmunds.com** after the first week or so of the program, the Top 10 most-purchased vehicles so far under CARS are: Ford Escape, Ford Focus, Jeep Patriot, Dodge Caliber, Ford F-150, Honda Civic, Chevy Silverado, Chevy Cobalt, Toyota Corolla, Ford Fusion. And the Toyota and Honda vehicles are vehicles built in the United States. (A similar sales list from NHTSA did *not* include trucks). The anti-CARS release also states that "routine vehicle maintenance for an entire year costs a consumer less than a single monthly new car payment." That would be a stretch even for a vehicle in its first few years of ownership, which mostly need oil changes, tire rotations, new wipers and a few filter replacements. But, wouldn't "clunkers" require more maintenance than a newer vehicle — maintenance well beyond belts, hoses, fluid exchange, etc.? A year's worth of this kind of maintenance could come out to considerably more than the \$400 or \$500 monthly car loan payment which I assume would be the average. Just my recent experience with my own aftermarket buggies easily ate up that amount with a complete brake job, or the replacement of an alternator and serpentine belt. No doubt, the association's heart is in the right place, and, definitely, maintaining an existing vehicle can be cost-effective when compared to a new car purchase. But this kind of hyperbole and misinformation just lessens our credibility when dealing with real issues that have a profound impact on our industry.

## ASE LAUNCHES MAINTENANCE AND INSPECTION PROGRAM



Delivered exclusively online and consisting of four e-learning training modules and a separate quiz, the **National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence (ASE)** has launched its new Maintenance and Inspection (M&I) Program. Targeting entry-level individuals whose responsibilities are concentrated in the vehicle maintenance area, the program is a first for ASE and incorporates learning modules to both deliver and measure the knowledge necessary to perform basic maintenance tasks. The M&I Program will be for many a step on the path to ASE's certification program.

## ACC TELECONVERSATIONS TO EXPLORE MARKETING CHALLENGES



Scheduled every other month, with a different topic and moderator for each call, the **Automotive Communications Council** has announced a series of Teleconversations, launching its first on Wednesday, Aug. 26. Each call will run no longer than 75 minutes and are free for current ACC members. Non-members are welcome to participate in no more than two of these calls. The first Teleconversations will be moderated by **Tom Marx**, president and CEO of **The Marx Group** and **Marx Group Advisors**, and will cover trade show marketing, including the need to demonstrate the ROI of these events to upper management. The format for the calls will be to introduce the topic and some speaking points, and then the floor will open to all participants to foster a dialogue. For more information or to register for the upcoming teleconversation, email [acc@aftermarket.org](mailto:acc@aftermarket.org).

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# PERSPECTIVE . . .

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## STUDY DEFINES ACCURATELY WHAT SHOPS EXPECT FROM SUPPLIERS

In the Aug. 5 issue of *Service Executive*, sister newsletter to *The Greensheet*, we talked about a recent **Frost & Sullivan** study that raised the issue of how those in the bays perceive the quality of parts from aftermarket suppliers. We noted that it wasn't exactly clear what the F&S study was saying but that any study questioning the perception of the quality of aftermarket parts "would require considerable scrutiny and discussion within our industry."

A little more than a week later, we have acquired an advance copy of what we consider to be a credible study from an industry group that may, at the very least, define the perception of the issue of quality, as well as many other factors in the purchasing process. The **Marketing Executives Council** of the **Automotive Aftermarket Suppliers Association** — a group formed in 2003 to work together to improve the image of the North American supplier base — will release next week a special report that analyzes the buying influences on the independent repair industry. The findings will certainly be quoted in the months ahead.

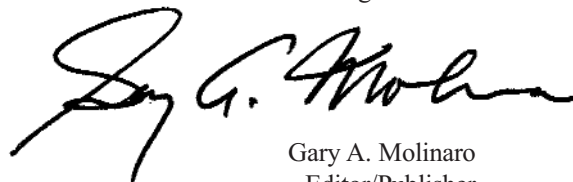
The study, titled "Independent Repair Industry: Focus Group Findings on Buying Influences of Repair Professionals," involved an independent third party conducting a series of six focus groups in Raleigh, Chicago and Los Angeles with "the aftermarket's 'front line' — the technicians and owners of independent repair facilities" to gain an understanding of their perceptions and opinions of aftermarket parts and products. The nearly 60 repair professionals who participated were decision-makers in their shops, with at least five years of experience. The shops had at least three bays with at least half of the product purchased coming from aftermarket suppliers and more than half of the work performed beyond oil changes and tire replacement. The shops involved also serviced all makes and models.

In brief, the findings were:

- The quality of aftermarket parts has significantly improved. They do not worry about quality like they did five to 10 years ago.
- Brand comes before country of origin. They may prefer "made in the U.S.," but what is important is who stands behind it.
- House brands sell on price and on price alone.
- No one wanted to admit they buy generic brands. The exception was if no other part was available and in cases where the part was not safety-related.
- OE quality is a very important selling point. However, there will be a backlash against products that are marketed as OE-quality which are not. The participants said that OE-quality products allow them to sell with confidence — and at a higher price.
- Form, fit and function, also associated as quality, is the primary factor when making a purchasing decision. Everything else comes second. Speed of delivery and availability comes next, followed by previous experience with the brand.
- With very few exceptions, online catalogs with illustrations have become a necessity. And, to these folks, industry formats and standards are not important — the accuracy of the data is important.
- Providing "full-line" offerings are not that important.
- Many shops participating already offer two-year, 24,000-mile warranties and expect their supplier partners to support .
- Responses on training from manufacturers were all over the board. They ranged from "we don't need it" to "we can never get enough of it." Other sources of training mentioned were the Internet, third parties and OE training (available to those employed by dealerships).
- Marketing programs are not respected. They want a quality product first and foremost, and marketing programs won't change that.
- Shops were not more loyal to manufacturers that offered essential services such as field sales support, training programs, or technical services like toll-free hotlines, cataloging and so forth.

In this case, it seems the right people were asked the right questions. And, those answers should serve us all in defining what we need to do to be better channel partners — regardless of where we are in this aftermarket supply chain.

*Editor's Note: The complete 21-page study will be available at <http://members.mema.org/AASA/Core/Orders/category.aspx?catid=8> starting Monday, Aug. 17.*



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29-31

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28-30

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