

Southern Africa

TREADS

DIGITAL

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HOW A ONE-MAN SHOW TURNED INTO A MULTIPLE-STORE BUSINESS

Mobile tyre fitment
service takes Australia
by storm

Have your say
in our
Interactive Poll!

TEPA outlines New Era
of Customer
Expectations

Bumpy ride ahead
for tyre sector after AGOA
expulsion threat



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Editor's Corner

Welcome back to our first edition for this year! As per recent communications, SA TREADS is evolving into an inter-active forum that allows for the trade to voice their thoughts on various topics – all while remaining anonymous!

Results from our first poll, which asked for reader response on whether you believe anti-dumping duties introduced in 2023, on Chinese imports were having the desired effect, can be found on page 12. In this issue, we give you another chance to voice your thoughts, this time, on the retail sector and whether independent stores without the backing of an international tyre manufacturer are at a disadvantage in the market.

Click on the current interactive link on page 12, or alternatively on the homepage of our international tyre portal – www.satreads.com – to be heard!

This year, we plan to continue bringing you the latest industry news, from the domestic and global market, while also profiling inspiring people in the industry who have

defied the odds and are running successful businesses. One such example is Shenaaz Singh of Neal's Tyres in Kwazulu-Natal. Read all about the early beginnings of the company, and what led to their unprecedented growth, in our dedicated Interview section.

Also, look out for our new column from TEPA on page 10, which will become a regular feature in our publication. The first, tackles the issue of Customer Expectations in the New Age, highlighting what the customer expects in all their business interactions and transactions.

And speaking of customer expectations, I believe you will find our feature story on Australia's new mobile tyre service and how it is revolutionising the market, interesting and inspirational.

Happy reading!

Liana



contents

Interview

Shenaaz Singh outlines entrepreneurial journey of Neal's Tyres 2

Feature

Mobile Tyre Fitment Service takes Australia by storm 6

TEPA Talk

The New Era of Customer Expectations: A story of connection and trust 10

Interactive Poll

Results of last poll
New poll – Do you believe independent retailers can compete effectively in this market without the backing of an international tyre manufacturer? 12

Local News

Threat of AGOA expulsion poses bumpy ride ahead for tyre and component sector 13

Five-year plan to address skills shortage in the tyre sector 14

Vipal presents new tread developed specifically for markets in Europe, Middle East and Africa 14

Midrand residents welcome Supa Quick branch opening 16

Mathe Group reaches millionth tyre recycling milestone 17

World News – Global

Recircle Awards finalises the 2025 shortlist with four new categories 18

World News – Europe

Survey reveals European preferences for tyre designs and performance attributes 20

Michelin pursues its "Michelin in Motion 2030" strategy, focusing on construction market 20

NIRA Dynamics unveils tread wear indicator: A breakthrough in tyre health monitoring 21

Michelin, Brembo partner on AI integration for braking systems 22

Continental to present at the 2025 Tire

Technology Expo 23

World News – Asia

BKT to showcase tyre solutions at National Farm Machinery Show 2025 24

Sailun showcases new products 24

Bridgestone announces US \$85million investment to reinforce premium passenger car tyre production and development in India 25

Sumitomo aims to make Dunlop a 'core brand' following acquisition 25

World News – USA

Goodyear OTR tyre business sale to Yokohama finalised 26

Point S USA leadership highlights secrets to explosive growth strategy 26

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FROM A ONE- MAN SHOW, TO A MULTIPLE-STORE BUSINESS

SHENAAZ SINGH, ON THE ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY OF NEAL'S TYRES.

Spending some time with store owner, Shenaaz Singh, reminded me of what it takes to become successful. Often, it is what people do not see: The late hours; the sacrifices; the fine balance between navigating the pressures of business with family life. Most of all, it takes persistence and resilience to overcome the tough times that businesses across all industry sectors, will inevitably encounter.

Shenaaz spoke candidly to us about how she and husband, Neal, went from one small start-up servicing channel in 1994, to establishing five dedicated tyre outlets across Kwazulu-Natal in 2025.

Shenaaz, how did you end up in the tyre industry? I am assuming this was not a career path you envisaged for yourself post-Matric?

You are correct. In fact, after matric, I entered Nursing School, with aspirations of becoming a nurse, but I did not complete the course due to ill health on the part of family members, who were in need of daily care.

I landed an administrative position with a fencing company, run by a wonderful entrepreneurial husband-and-wife team, that introduced me to common business practices and taught me the basics of running a business, including book-keeping and accounting – skills I am grateful for, today.

Quite unexpectedly, I was introduced to the tyre industry by my husband, Neal, who was offered an opportunity by Trentyre, to service breakdowns in the Ladysmith area and surrounds, some 30 years ago. In those days, Trentyre was the only tyre company to offer a nationwide breakdown service.

Neal took up the opportunity, armed with only one vehicle and his determination to provide this much-needed service to the best of his ability, even if it meant attending to the broken-down vehicle himself.



His impeccable work ethic coupled with positive reports from the customers he was servicing, paid off handsomely, with the breakdown service soon expanding into other parts of the province, at Trentyre's request.

The next step for us, was securing premises in Ladysmith – our hometown – to provide the local community with a retail store, as well as a truck tyre servicing centre.

With Neal occupied in managing the breakdown side of the business, I took over

“

The next step was securing premises in Ladysmith to provide the local community with a retail store and truck tyre servicing centre.

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I firmly believe there is a solution to every problem.

”

the admin for both entities, and stationed myself at Neal's Tyres, Ladysmith, taking on the responsibility of running the store, negotiating deals and taking charge of stock inventory.

In addition, if Neal was busy attending to a breakdown, I would step in to assist with special stock requirements and deliveries. No task was too much, or too strenuous.

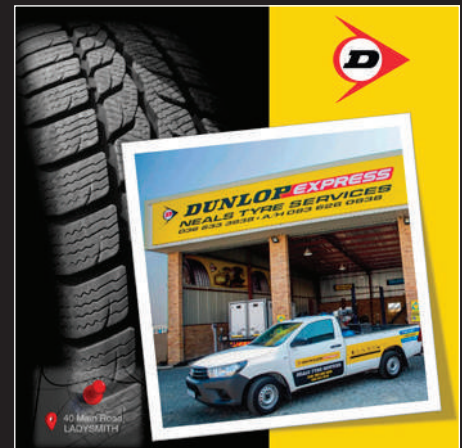
I firmly believe that there is a solution to every problem, so when the occasion demanded it, I found a way to get the job done.

Of course, the workload was heavy – especially in the beginning – with Neal and I often working 16-hour-days in order to keep up. But, we did it. Eventually, we grew to the point where we could hire



Neal and Shenaaz Singh.





additional staff, to assist with counter sales and other office duties.

When did you join the Dunlop franchise?

We had never considered the possibility of taking up a franchise opportunity, having grown used to managing the business independently.

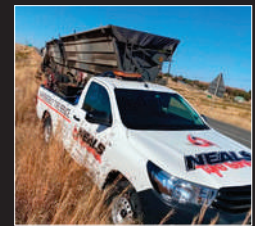
But, in 2019, we were approached by Dunlop and offered an opportunity to join the Dunlop franchise network, in return for committing to a stipulated monthly sales target – which, back then, seemed like an impossible feat.

Nevertheless, we decided to take the risk, and have not looked back. The monthly target we were a little fearful of, turned out to be a 'non-issue', and the Dunlop team did everything they could to support us, by way of marketing, signage and in-store promotions.

More important, there was no interference from them over the way we ran our business. To the contrary, our alliance with Dunlop only served to enhance the business, catapulting it to where it is today and they remain valued partners in our business, to this day.

How did you navigate the challenges of Covid-19, to come through on the other side?

We registered as essential services and we managed to overcome the months to pay staff and meet our debit orders. Countless hours were spent navigating



the TERS benefits for the staff who were unable to work. Often, to ensure we could submit without the system crashing, we would wake up at midnight to submit the necessary TERS paperwork.

How many stores do you currently have?

In addition to our flagship store in Ladysmith, we now have satellite branches offering a 24/7 service on tyre repairs in Howick, Newcastle, Harrismith and Estcourt. Estcourt fully caters for trucks, while offering truck washes, wheel alignment and mechanical maintenance, where required.

I believe you have two children. How did you manage the demands of motherhood alongside your work commitments?

Balancing the two is not easy, as many working women have discovered, but it is possible if you are organised and are lucky to have support from family. Plus, thankfully, Neal and I have always

worked as a team, both in business and where it concerns the family.

Our children are now young adults, with one now a Chartered Accountant and other still at university pursuing a career in Computer Studies, which has obviously freed up some of my time.

“

We now have satellite branches in Howick, Newcastle, Harrismith and Estcourt.

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MOBILE TYRE



MOBILE TYRE
The Tyre Shop that

7 Days A Week



A man in a dark suit and white shirt is smiling and leaning against the side of a white van. The van has a logo on its side. To the right, there is a stack of several black tires. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be a workshop or garage setting.

MOBILE TYRE FITMENT SERVICE TAKES AUSTRALIA BY STORM

Why spend your valuable time waiting for new tyres to be fitted to your vehicle, when your day could be used more constructively? Of course, tyre replacement, wheel balancing and wheel alignment are crucial to keeping you safe on the road, and cannot be neglected, but what if it were possible for tyre technicians to come to you? In Australia, this is now not only possible, it is fast becoming the preferred option with consumers.

Embracing the concept, 'in the digital age, e-commerce plus mobile equals success', an aspiring set of Australian entrepreneurs – Travis Osborne and Jamie Cartwright – embarked on an ambitious campaign in 2012, to bring tyres to the consumer's door, taking account of the drawbacks the traditional tyre retail model is built on, namely: The product is a grudge purchase; choosing a size can be confusing; promotional offers are generic; the fitting process involves travel and waiting.

"Before Mobile Tyre Shop, consumers had no alternative, but as the market evolved, so did consumer expectations, with Australians now expecting to be able to shop for all goods and services wherever and whenever is most convenient without sacrificing value or quality, and tyres are no different", claimed Cartwright.

The first company of its kind in Australia, Mobile Tyre Shop now makes the process of replacing your car's tyres simple and fuss-free, offering the ability to search, compare and purchase tyres online, and then have those tyres conveniently replaced at home or work. Technicians travel directly to their customers and change their tyres on-site.

The technology

Initially, the pair purchased off-the-shelf

software to build the business, but when this was found to be too limiting, they turned to Claris FileMaker, in a bid to digitally transform their entire business, one piece at a time – a strategy that culminated in the creation of a superior, dedicated customer software that encompasses every aspect of the business.

"This idea of making gradual improvements ensures we test and learn from them, then repeat improvements with new areas of business, has made FileMaker the right solution for us. We can work one-on-one with a developer and chip away at ideas and projects so the business becomes more efficient and more

“

Technicians travel directly to their customers and change tyres on site.

”

saleable," explained COO Jamie Cartwright. Today, Mobile Tyre Shop runs its entire business on Claris FileMaker.

While one could argue that mobile tyre fitment is a straightforward concept that does not require such a degree of complexity, Cartwright disagrees.

"Consider this," he said. "This is a three-sided business interfacing between the customer, the manufacturer and the fitters/technicians in the field- and every innovation and incident has the potential to disrupt every other part of the logistics chain.

The company's comprehensive software system now sports a multiple of features, among them: An integrated with eBay online store; an internal live chat messaging system; a barcoding system to keep track of tyre inventory; an automation feature that enables all SMS and email communications with customers and an app for in-the-field technicians.

Mobile Tyre Shop is now hugely

successful in the Australian market, so much so, that their success has led to their website and branding being mimicked and even shamelessly ripped off by other companies around the world.

More important, the company appears to have captured a considerable portion of the online tyre sales market, which in Australia, accounts for around four percent.

From a single mobile van that began servicing consumers in Melbourne, Mobile Tyre Shop has mushroomed to dozens of service locations across the country.

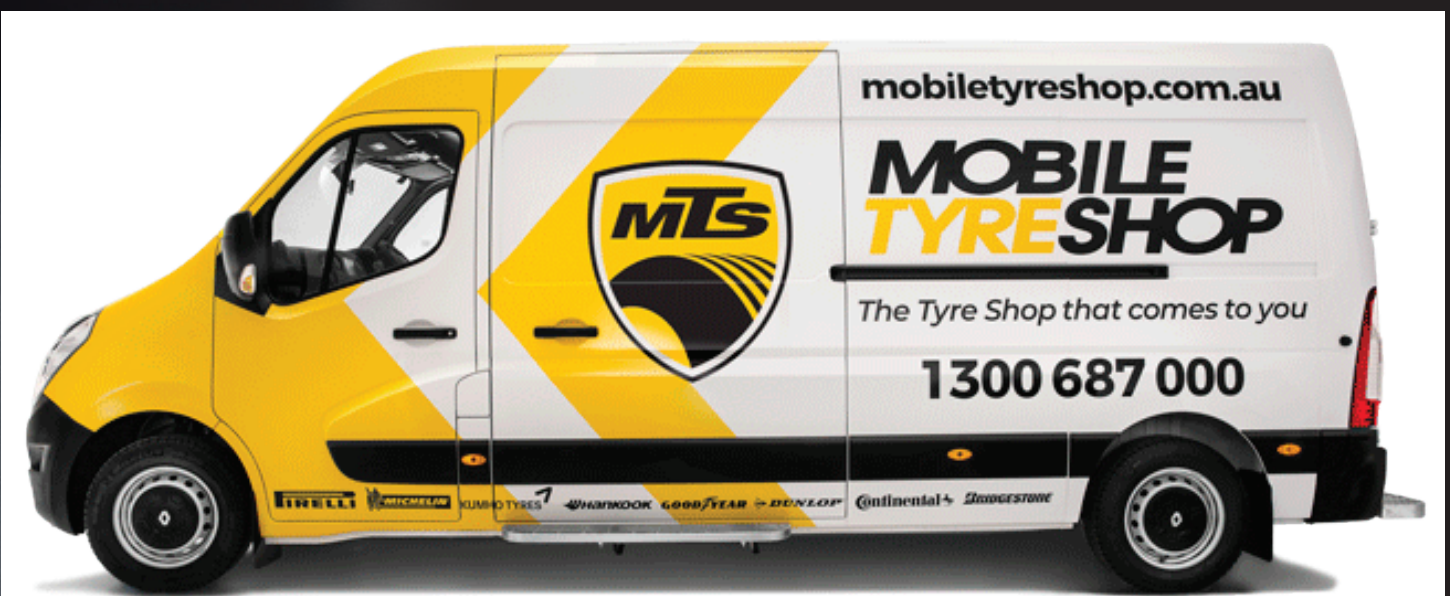
"Our unique ability to combine mobility and e-commerce is what has made Australia's number one rated tyre retailer on product review, and sets up for success in the future," said Cartwright.

What is more, franchise opportunities for other aspiring entrepreneurs wishing to invest in this successful business model are on offer in Australia and beyond its borders.

“

From a single mobile van in Melbourne, Mobile Tyre Shop has mushroomed to dozens of service locations across the country.

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The New Era of Customer Expectations:

A Story of Connection and Trust

Customer expectations are shifting toward seamless convenience and honest business dealings. Businesses are rising to the challenge with mobile solutions, real-time updates, and clear communication, fostering trust and loyalty. By listening to feedback and anticipating needs, customer service leaders are redefining connections, proving that simplicity and authenticity are the keys to lasting success.

Written By: Dylan Petzer (TEPA National & Central Vice-Chairperson)

Imagine this: a busy professional is rushing between meetings when they realise their car needs urgent maintenance. With just a few taps on their phone, they schedule a service, view upfront costs, and receive updates—all without missing a beat. It's effortless, transparent, and exactly what they needed.

This isn't a futuristic dream; it's the reality many businesses are striving to create as they adapt to evolving customer expectations. Convenience and transparency are no longer perks—they're essentials. Customers want to feel valued, and that means meeting them on their terms, with solutions that make life simpler.

Take mobile services, for example. Whether it's scheduling appointments, tracking progress, or accessing support, customers increasingly expect everything to be at their fingertips. It's not just about speed; it's about

the ease of knowing they're in control.

But convenience alone isn't enough. Transparency has become the bedrock of trust. With industry forums such as Right to Repair, Customers no longer want glossy promises—they want honesty. They value upfront pricing, real-time communication, and authentic reviews. They want to know businesses are accountable and care enough to communicate openly, even when things don't go as planned.

Businesses that embrace these principles are not only meeting practical needs but also fostering emotional connections. When customers feel heard, respected, and empowered, they form lasting loyalty that goes beyond single transactions. It's a shift from merely providing a service to building relationships rooted in trust and care.

For customer service managers, this shift is both a challenge and an opportunity. By listening closely to feedback and designing

services that anticipate needs, they're not just meeting expectations—they're creating moments of delight.

It's in these moments, where convenience and transparency intersect, that trust blossoms. The future of customer service is bright. Businesses that embrace this new era of connection and authenticity will thrive, not just because they're delivering services, but because they're building relationships. In this journey, everyone wins—the busy professional, the responsive business, and the trust that binds them together.

For further details or inquiries, please feel free to reach out to TEPA by contacting Marietjie Smith at marietjie.smith@rmi.org.za. We look forward to connecting with you!



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For over 60 years, **Bandag** has been synonymous with retreading excellence in South Africa. Our legacy is built on innovation, sustainability, and a commitment to serving the local trucking community with industry leading solutions.

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Sustainability Savings Add Up

01

**Bandag
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Equals**



57

Litres of oil
saved



13

Kilograms of tyre
waste saved



19

Kilograms total
waste saved



805

Energy saved
(kWh)

100

**Bandag
Retreads
Equals**



5700

Litres of oil
saved



1300

Kilograms of tyre
waste saved



1900

Kilograms total
waste saved



80K

Energy saved
(kWh)

1M

**Bandag
Retreads
Equals**



57M

Litres of oil
saved



13M

Kilograms of tyre
waste saved



19M

Kilograms total
waste saved



805M

Energy saved
(kWh)

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1 Reduction in tyres estimated based on available Bandag USA production history from 1957 to 2015.

Lower operating costs refer to the average cost savings generated by using Bandag retreads compared to new tyres only.

2 Savings refer to oil and energy used to produce standard tyre. Source: USA Environmental Protection Agency.



In our previous issue, we asked...

Have the anti-dumping regulations negatively impacted your business?

HERE ARE THE RESULTS...

36% YES 64% NO



HAVE YOUR SAY....

Do you believe independent retailers can compete effectively in this market without the backing of an international tyre manufacturer?

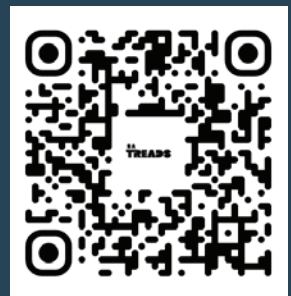
CLICK HERE TO VOTE



YES



NO



*Results will be published in our next edition. *NB: Your identity will remain confidential*

THREAT OF AGOA EXPULSION POSES BUMPY RIDE AHEAD FOR TYRE AND COMPONENT SECTOR



With economists warning that AGOA's duty-free access to the U.S. market could potentially be on the chopping block, South Africa's tyre, equipment, and parts industry, a sector traditionally reliant on these trade benefits to stay competitive with other markets that are subsidised, is concerned about possible increased tariffs, lost contracts and supply chain disruptions.

Dylan Petzer National and Central Vice-Chairperson of the Tyre, Equipment Parts Association (TEPA), a proud association of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI), says with billions in exports at potential risk, the road ahead is uncertain, but strategic agility will be key to staying ahead of the game.

AGO A has been a lifeline for equitable participation by South Africa's automotive exports to the U.S., covering around 90 tariff lines under Chapter 87. Petzer says for TEPA members who supply tyres, automotive components, and repair equipment, the

potential loss of AGOA is more than just an inconvenience – it is a direct threat to South African manufacturers and exporters wishing to compete equitably in the international market. "Many of our members have spent years cultivating relationships with U.S. buyers, relying on AGOA's duty-free status to level the playing field."

Since AGOA's introduction, South Africa's automotive-related exports to the U.S. have surged from a modest \$151 million in 2000 to an impressive \$1.6 billion in 2016. Passenger vehicles dominate these numbers, but parts and accessories alone accounted for \$62 million in 2016. Breaking it down further: \$42 million benefited from the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP), \$1 million under AGOA (non-GSP), and \$18 million without preference. (AGO A, 2025)

Petzer says it is not just about losing market share – it is about the domino effect. "Our concern is that if exports drop, so does demand for locally produced rubber, manufacturing equipment, and logistics services. This will naturally

result in factory downsizing, job losses and wasted investments in meeting U.S. safety and environmental standards. Add to this a substantial loss of tax revenue to the fiscus, and we have a recipe for a potential societal disaster."

While the sector waits for further developments, TEPA members will continue to explore alternative markets like the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA) and Europe as well as exploring opportunities afforded by the shift towards green manufacturing and electric vehicle components.

"Losing AGOA would be a significant blow, but our sector is resilient. This industry has faced tough roads before. The key to survival? Strategic agility, relentless advocacy, and a solid partnership between government and industry. It's time to buckle up because this ride isn't over yet. TEPA continues to maintain that improved diplomatic relations between the governments of the U.S. and South Africa, based on mutual trust and respect, will go a long way towards restoring stability on the export market front," he concludes.

FIVE-YEAR PLAN TO ADDRESS SKILLS SHORTAGES IN THE TYRE SECTOR

The Tyre Equipment Parts Association (TEPA), a proud association of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI), is making significant strides in the South African tyre sector to tackle the critical skills shortage in the sector. A comprehensive five-year plan has been outlined to modernise and align training programmes with the evolving demands of the sector, ensuring relevance and sustainability for the future.

Angie Frederics, TEPA's Training Committee leader, explains the challenges driving this initiative. "The South African skills development landscape is undergoing significant changes, with the phasing out of SAQA historical qualifications and their replacement with QCTO (Quality Council for Trades & Occupations) occupational qualifications. While this shift aims to enhance skills training, it has created short-term challenges for Skills Development Providers to enrol new learners into skills programmes."

The transition deadline for SAQA qualifications was 30 June 2024, yet not all programmes have successfully transitioned to QCTO qualifications. This has left gaps, particularly in critical programmes such as automotive servicing and tyre sales, which are yet to be registered under the QCTO framework.

The current state of training

For now, Skills Development Providers can only offer two approved programmes under

SAQA's extended qualifications:

- Tyre Repairer (SP0561)
- Wheel Alignment (SP0963)

However, several key skills programmes, including automotive component diagnostics, tyre and parts sales, and divisional management, remain unavailable until their QCTO counterparts are registered. This has delayed the rollout of much-needed training for new entrants and professionals seeking to upskill.

TEPA'S FIVE-YEAR PLAN

To address these challenges and establish a sustainable skills pipeline, TEPA has outlined a structured five-year plan:

- **Year 1:** The focus is on reviewing and aligning existing legacy skills programmes with QCTO standards. This involves updating programme content to meet current and future industry needs. Frederics notes: "We are collaborating closely with merSETA to expedite this process and get learners back into classrooms as soon as possible."
- **Year 2:** TEPA will begin creating new skills programmes to address gaps in the current offerings and prepare for the next phases of the plan.
- **Year 3:** Pilot programmes will be launched at select fitment centres. These pilots will refine the implementation process, gather feedback, and address any challenges before a broader rollout.
- **Year 4:** The full rollout of finalised skills



programmes will begin, involving extensive collaboration with stakeholders. Accredited training providers and fitment centres will be key partners in delivering these programmes nationwide.

- **Year 5:** Marketing and outreach campaigns will drive participation from industry professionals and attract new talent into the sector. The focus will be on creating career pathways and promoting the opportunities available in the tyre industry.

THE ROAD AHEAD

Frederics emphasises the importance of industry collaboration: "The success of this plan hinges on collective action. TEPA is committed to working with all stakeholders, including merSETA and training providers, to ensure we meet the industry's skills demands while fostering inclusivity and growth."

While the challenges are significant, the industry's commitment to innovation and collaboration provides hope for a more sustainable and skilled workforce. As the five-year plan progresses, TEPA aims to position South Africa's tyre sector as a leader in training and development, ensuring a brighter future for both businesses and professionals.

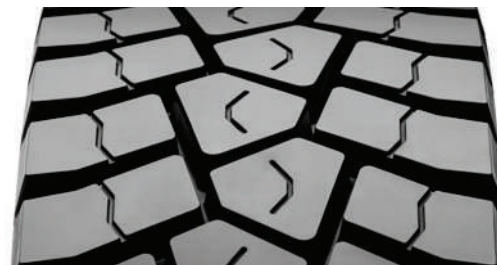
VIPAL PRESENTS NEW TREAD DEVELOPED SPECIFICALLY FOR MARKETS IN EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

Vipal Rubber claims the company stands out for offering innovative products with superior quality to different markets where it operates. Following this principle, the company presents its new tread: VT570. Designed to meet specific needs from the EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa) market, it counts with rotational direction, offering better traction power in the mixed segment (on/off-road). This application is ideal for vehicles that operate in varied terrains, including paved and non-paved streets

and roads. It can be used in transportation for civil construction, garbage collection and agricultural activities, for example.

One of its main characteristics are blocks designed to promote torque distribution and maximise mileage performance. The compound was specially developed to offer greater resistance to cutting and chipping, balancing this feature with greater durability and useful life.

The new design that integrates the tire retreading tread portfolio was born from



a specific demand from the Caucasus market. However, Gilson Dugno, International Sales Manager for Vipal Rubber, explains that an internal survey conducted among the main European clients indicated the interest in having the VT570. "It fits well into our current portfolio of designs for application in our market," says Dugno.

The product is available in three widths (240, 250 and 260 mm), allowing to cater to most dimensions of tire used in these operations. The new tread also has grooves designed to provide self-cleaning and centre designed with reinforcements that increase protection to the casing against damages.

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MIDRAND RESIDENTS WELCOME SUPA QUICK BRANCH OPENING



On Friday, 14 February, a new Supa Quick branch opened in the heart of Midrand, conveniently located between Johannesburg and Pretoria.

The new branch can be found at the corner of Seventh & New Road, Erand Gardens, in Midrand—behind the new Engen Garage off New Road. It is set to meet the growing demand for reliable vehicle services in the area.

The strategic positioning of the new location aims to serve the rising need for Supa Quick’s services, ensuring that customers have easy access to the services they depend on.

Camilla Clucas, owner of Supa Quick New Road, explained: “Midrand has developed into a dynamic economic hub, driven by residential growth, expanding businesses, and increasing

industrial activity. The New Road area, where we’ve opened our store, has seen impressive development, making it the ideal location for our new branch. We are always eager to establish ourselves in high-demand areas where we can best serve our customers’ needs.”

“As a business, we focus on road safety by offering not only tyres but also essential services such as brakes, batteries, shocks, and more. Whether we’re assisting individuals or businesses, vehicle safety, reliability, and performance remain our top priorities—standards that are upheld at every Supa Quick branch, including our new Midrand location,” Camilla added.

Supa Quick is committed to safety, leading the way in providing mobility solutions that ensure vehicles remain roadworthy for longer. Our expert consultations ensure the correct tyres are fitted for each specific need, along

with proper alignment, rotations, and accurate tyre pressure.

Maintaining the high standards of all Supa Quick locations, the Midrand branch offers a modern, fully equipped shop, exceptional customer service, and a team of knowledgeable and friendly staff ready to assist.

Customers in Midrand can look forward to excellent service, great deals on a wide range of products, and the added benefit of job creation for the local community.

“We are deeply committed to the communities we serve. Our focus on safety extends to ensuring the well-being of children in vehicles, and we pride ourselves on keeping our promises—from providing outstanding service to offering competitive prices. These are real benefits for both our customers and the community,” Camilla concluded.

MATHE GROUP REACHES MILLIONTH TYRE RECYCLING MILESTONE

Hammarisdale-based radial truck tyre recycler, Mathe Group, has processed its millionth radial truck tyre, bringing the total amount of rubber crumb produced for re-use in key industrial and construction applications to around 38 500 tons, according to CEO Dr Mehran Zarrebini.

Based on an infill of 100 tons of rubber crumb per full size artificial football field, this equates to 385 full size football fields or 700 full size hockey fields (based on 55 tons needed to create the elastic layer underneath artificial grass).

The amount of rubber crumb produced would have provided the asphalt and seal needed to pave at least 8000 km of roads.

Dr Zarrebini, a British investor who initially acquired iconic KwaZulu-Natal based carpet manufacturer, Van Dyck, discovered Mathe Group as a small operation with just 20 employees operating in New Germany in 2016. He was looking for rubber crumb to manufacture acoustic underlays and acoustic cradles for flooring in high rise buildings – products that he has since improved and continues to export.

Having acquired a 49% shareholding in Mathe Group, he relocated the company to its present site in Hammarisdale, significantly boosting production through ongoing re-investment in plant over the past eight years. Mathe Group currently recycles approximately 700 radial truck tyres per day to produce 30 tons of rubber crumb. 70% of each 55kg truck tyre becomes rubber crumb and 30% is waste steel which is exported via the port of Durban.

Through its own research and development or through working with key partners, Mathe Group's repertoire of products has grown to include non-slip paving and flooring for agricultural use, ballistics products and gym mats, rubber pavers and the infill for sports fields. Various sizes of rubber crumb are also key ingredients in bitumen for road resurfacing, non-slip paints, moulding of parts for the automotive industry, the retreading of tyres and the production of brake linings.



Dr Zarrebini says that a number of challenges have stood in the way of Mathe Group not achieving its important millionth tyre milestone far sooner. These include the Covid-19 pandemic which shut down the plant for 18 months, loadshedding, water shortages and ongoing legal battles and delayed implementation of the Industry Waste Tyre Management Plan (IWTMP).

Mathe Group is currently awaiting the renewal and expansion of its tyre quota from the Waste Bureau. This will enable this highly successful business to significantly expand output and continue to develop new products.

At present, 50% of a tranche of new equipment needed to replace existing plant will arrive in South Africa at the beginning of the New Year with the remainder ready to be shipped during the second quarter of 2025. Dr Zarrebini says ongoing replacement of equipment that comes into contact with abrasive hard rubber and steel is essential.

In addition, he says that Mathe Group is finalising external funding for additional upgrades to the existing line which enable

the company to diversify.

“For the phase two investment, we designed the equipment to have the flexibility to process radial steel truck tyres as well as a variety of other tyres. Although nylon truck tyres are few and far between now because trucking companies prefer to use radial steel tyres that are of a higher quality and retreadable, this gives us the security of more variant tyre supply,” he says.

Waiting in the wings – and dependant on the delivery of more tyres for recycling – is a phase three investment. Mathe Group has already been granted a waste management license for the installation of a completely new line to complement its existing one.

Dr Zarrebini says that although Mathe Group's growth from 2016 to 2019 was steep, this levelled off with the advent of load shedding, high energy costs and the factory closure during the pandemic. With a more stable business environment and energy supply, output during 2024 has again increased as the factory is able to operate 24/7.

With the upcoming investment, he is optimistic that Mathe Group will reach its two millionth tyre milestone rapidly.

RECIRCLE AWARDS FINALISES THE 2025 SHORTLIST WITH FOUR NEW CATEGORIES

Recircle AWARDS 2025

TYRE INDUSTRY EDUCATION AWARD
NOMINEE 2025

- Geoff Fowler
- Gisele Jung
- TIA
- UNIVIPAL
- weibold!

SPIRIT OF TYRE RECYCLING AWARD
NOMINEE 2025

- FREEE
- MATHE GROUP
- PLITEQ
- PRETRED
- PVP

TYRE PYROLYSIS AWARD
NOMINEE 2025

- Bolder Industries
- contec
- ECOLOMONDO
- GREENVAL TECHNOLOGIES
- innovations

SPIRIT OF TREAD RUBBER MANUFACTURING AWARD
NOMINEE 2025

- EVERSAFE RUBBER
- CALGO
- KARTINDO
- ITG
- OTIPLER

BEST TYRE RECYCLING INNOVATION
NOMINEE 2025

- EVONIK
- REGOM
- ELT SORTING TECHNOLOGY
- WATER JET DENITRIFICATION SYSTEM FOR OTR, TRUCK AND BUS ELTS
- RUBBER CONVERSION
- NEW DEVULCANISATION TECHNOLOGY

*OPEN TO PUBLIC VOTE

In addition to the four new categories, the 2025 edition will recognise outstanding projects in the tyre recycling sector with the Industry Achievement Award for The Tyre Recycling Sector.

The four new categories winners will be decided by the Nominations Committee directly instead of a public vote.

Retreading Business and Tyre & Rubber Recycling magazines, the organisers of the Recircle Awards, the global industry awards event recognising sustainable innovation, production processes, management and services within the tyre retreading and recycling sectors, have finalised the shortlist for this year's awards by revealing the nominees of four new categories, whose winners will be decided by the Nominations Committee position as the key industry awards event recognising sustainability in the tyre industry.

The Recircle Awards has also announced the nominees for the Industry Achievement Award for The Tyre Recycling Sector, with the Nominations Committee deciding the winner for this award as well.

This award replaces the Best Tyre Recycling Research Project category, which the Nominations Committee has decided to suspend due to the lack of nominations. As in previous editions, the Nominations Committee, responsible for deciding on the winners in the new categories, consists of 13 members from the tyre retreading and recycling sectors from around the world, standing out for their independence and experience in their respective fields, including the editors of the magazines Retreading Business and Tyre & Rubber Recycling. Its responsibilities also include selecting the list of finalists from the nominations made through the official vote and platform on the official Recircle Awards website.

In addition, the Best Tyre Recycling Innovation finalists have also been revealed. The public vote for this category will be open until Friday, March 14 at 23:59 GMT and can be lodged via the awards website. Participants and voters must remember that the voting system allows for only one vote per person and category.



THE FINALISTS OF THE NEW CATEGORIES INCLUDE:

Tyre Industry Education Award:

- Geoff Fowler (Imperial College, London)
- Gisele Jung (Université Libre de Bruxelles)
- Tire Industry Association
- Unipal
- Weibold Academy

Spirit of Tyre Recycling Award:

- Free Recycle
- Mathe Group
- Pliteq Inc.
- Pretred Inc.
- PVP Triptis

Tyre Pyrolysis Award:

- Bolder Industries
- Contec SA
- Ecolomondo
- Greenval Technologies
- Pyrum Innovations

Spirit of Tread Rubber Manufacturing Award:

- Eversafe
- Galgo
- Kartindo Rubber
- ITG
- Tipler

Best Tyre Recycling Innovation – Open for Public Vote:

- Evonik: Partial Reversal of Vulcanisation Using Vinyl Silanes

- Regom: ELT sorting technology
- Rover Research: Water Jet Demolition System for OTR, Truck and Bus ELTs
- Rubber Conversion: New Devulcanisation Technology

The finalists of the first 14 categories revealed earlier can be found on the Recircle Awards website. The winners will be announced on Thursday, May 22 at the Autopromotec trade fair in Bologna, Italy.

“With today’s presentation of the remaining finalists, we are now in the final stretch of the Recircle Awards 2025. This has been an edition with numerous new features that we have implemented to reinforce the prestige of the awards. We can say that we are very satisfied with the effort we have made and the response we have received,” said David Wilson, Head Judge of the Nominations Committee and editor of Retreading Business and Tyre & Rubber Recycling.

“Of course, we will continue to acknowledge the contributions that the sector sends us. Our goal is to keep improving with each edition until we become the benchmark awards for the sector. I can only thank those who are voting for their support and participation and encourage them to continue voting until March 14. I wish the finalists good luck and invite everyone to the awards ceremony at Autopromotec.”



By John Stone

For the past two decades Sapphire Media has supported the worldwide tyre and automotive industry as a unique Business Media Consultant delivering professional editorial and marketing/PR services to a global client base and as a regular columnist in leading publications.



SURVEY REVEALS EUROPEAN PREFERENCES FOR TYRE DESIGNS AND PERFORMANCE ATTRIBUTES

The survey revealed that 45% of respondents prefer cars with larger wheels.

An Apollo Tyres survey shows European driving enthusiasts prefer replacement tyres that combine stylish designs with high performance. Among drivers who “love” or “like” driving, 43% say they agree that tyres

look boring and want more distinctive sidewall designs.

YOUNGER DRIVERS FAVOR UNIQUE TYRE DESIGNS

Younger drivers, particularly those aged 18 to 24, display the highest interest in tyres with unique sidewall designs, with 57% expressing this

preference. In comparison, only 15% of drivers aged 65 and older share the same interest.

The survey also reveals that 45% of respondents prefer cars with larger wheels. This trend aligns with the rising demand for stylish high-performance tyres, which enhance the sporty appeal of vehicles across Europe.

MICHELIN PURSUES ITS “MICHELIN IN MOTION 2030” STRATEGY, FOCUSING ON CONSTRUCTION MARKET

The Michelin Group is selling its Sri Lanka-based Midigama Tyre Division and Casting Product Division plants that manufacture bias tyres and tracks for compact construction equipment, to the CEAT Group, a recognised player that is a better fit to these activities. The sale also includes the Camso brand, a renowned brand in these segments, at the end of a three-year licensing period. The transaction, which remains subject to regulatory approvals from the relevant authorities, is valued at an EBITDA multiple of 4.6 (adjusted EBITDA 2023).

The decision is aligned with the Michelin in Motion 2030 sustainable growth strategy, which focuses the Group's efforts where its innovations and technologies are the most valued.

The Michelin Group will thus continue to mainly offer its radial technology tyres to the addressed market and will, as a result, stop the production of bias tyres in its Olsztyn factory in

Poland. This transaction will help strengthen the financial performance of the Specialty tyre businesses, part of the Group's third Reporting Segment (RS3): the divested or discontinued activities, which account for around 3% of RS3 net sales, generate profitability well below the RS3 average.



NIRA DYNAMICS UNVEILS TREAD WEAR INDICATOR: A BREAKTHROUGH IN TYRE HEALTH MONITORING



Sweden-based NIRA Dynamics, a leader in automotive software innovation, announces the launch of its latest breakthrough product: the Tread Wear Indicator (TWI). TWI delivers real-time monitoring of tyre wear, providing drivers and fleet operators with critical insights into tyre health.

As the automotive industry shifts from traditional service intervals to continuous, data-driven monitoring, tyre health is emerging as a top maintenance priority. Tyre wear directly impacts vehicle safety, fuel efficiency, and environmental sustainability, and NIRA's TWI is a game-changing solution that addresses these issues head-on. "Our mission with TWI is to bring a new level of reliability and ease to tyre monitoring," says Josefin Storm, Product Manager TWI of NIRA Dynamics. "As the industry moves toward greener, more sustainable solutions, TWI is here to support that journey. It not only ensures safer driving for individuals but also offers fleet operators a cost-effective way to maintain their vehicles efficiently."

Enhanced Safety for Drivers and Fleets

Low tread depth can increase braking distances and compromise handling, especially on wet or icy roads. By continuously monitoring tread wear, TWI provides early warnings that enable drivers to replace tyres before they reach a critical level of wear. For fleet operators, TWI's insights allow for better planning, avoiding unexpected tyre replacements and ensuring fleet vehicles are safe and roadworthy.

Sustainability Through Data-Driven Decisions

TWI aligns with NIRA's commitment to sustainability by helping drivers make more informed choices regarding tyre replacement. With TWI, tyres can be replaced when necessary, reducing waste, lowering particle emissions, and supporting greener driving practices. This data-driven approach to tyre maintenance is particularly impactful in fleet management, where optimising tyre usage can lead to significant environmental benefits.

No Additional Hardware Needed Unlike other tyre monitoring systems that require expensive hardware, TWI operates solely on the existing sensors in the vehicle. This means, low cost and low/no maintenance.

Roadmap and Future Developments Through close collaboration with industry partners and OEMs, NIRA Dynamics aims to make TWI a standard for tyre health monitoring, meeting the needs of an evolving automotive landscape. "This is just the beginning," adds Lisa Åbom. "Our team is dedicated to refining and expanding the capabilities of TWI to ensure that every driver, fleet operator, and manufacturer has access to reliable, real-time data for safer, more sustainable driving." For more information on the Tread Wear Indicator and other NIRA Dynamics products, visit niradynamics.com.

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MICHELIN, BREMBO PARTNER ON AI INTEGRATION FOR BRAKING SYSTEMS



Michelin and Brembo will exchange real-time data between Michelin's connected solutions software.

Brembo and Michelin have signed a global agreement to enhance vehicle performance and improve safety and comfort standards. This Brembo and Michelin collaboration on braking systems and AI integration will maximize vehicle efficiency and safety, the companies said.

The Brembo and Michelin collaboration will exchange real-time data between Michelin's connected solutions software. This software provides tire grip data, and Brembo's SENSIFY braking system. This data exchange will enable engineers to fine-tune the braking system with precision, according to the companies.

MICHELIN'S CONNECTED SOLUTIONS AND TYRE DATA ANALYSIS

Michelin's connected solutions rely on the company's expertise in tyre physics modeling and simulation. The software portfolio provides real-time information on tyre wear, load, and grip, and works with all tyre brands.

"We are thrilled to join forces with a brand like Brembo. Allowing customers to keep their tires in use as long as possible with total peace of mind is a core objective of Michelin," said Serge Lafon, President of the Business Line Automotive Original Equipment at Michelin. "Together, Michelin and Brembo are building a unique solution for the vehicles of the future, developed today by the car makers."

BREMBO'S SENSIFY SYSTEM AND AI-DRIVEN BRAKING

Brembo designed the SENSIFY system for modern vehicles. It combines braking components with AI, algorithms, and sensors to control each wheel independently,

Brembo said.

"At Brembo, we believe in the power of technology and artificial intelligence," said Daniele Schillaci, CEO of Brembo. "In fact, we are increasingly becoming a company combining software capabilities with our expertise in the corner of the vehicle, mastering calipers, discs and friction materials with a unique know-how. SENSIFY represents the new standard in braking that will target a zero accidents vision."

BREMBO AND MICHELIN AI COLLABORATION TESTING

During initial tests, the integration of Michelin's tyre models with Brembo's braking models reduced braking distances by up to four meters during ABS events, the companies said. The system also showed quicker response times, minimised traction loss, improved lateral stability, and no wheel locking.

CONTINENTAL TO PRESENT AT THE 2025 TIRE TECHNOLOGY EXPO



The focus of the four technical presentations are on reducing the environmental footprint of tyres during their use phase.

Continental will showcase its latest advancements in tyre technology with four technical presentations at the Tire Technology Expo conference. The conference takes place March 4-6, in Hanover, Germany.

Jorge Almeida, head of sustainability at Continental Tires, and Prof. Burkhard Wies, head of applied research and innovation, will open the event with a presentation on the company's sustainability strategy on Mar. 4.

SUSTAINABILITY IN CONTINENTAL TIRE TECHNOLOGY

The presentation will focus on reducing the environmental footprint of tyres during their use phase. Continental will also present three

additional expert-led sessions. These include an analysis of tyre wear particles under real conditions, a new testing device for measuring energy losses in rubber samples, and an environmentally friendly adhesion technology called COKOON.

"Continental is pursuing eager sustainability ambitions. But, in the rapidly evolving tyre industry, we also know that certain overarching issues can only be solved collectively. Cross-divisional research projects, exchanges of expertise and the pooling of know-how form the foundation for this. The Tire Technology Expo conference is therefore extremely important to us," said Wies.

EVALUATING TYRE WEAR PARTICLES UNDER REAL CONDITIONS

Driving generates emissions, including tyre and road wear particles. To better understand

their environmental impact, Continental conducted a study with the Technical University of Braunschweig, Germany. The research project, titled "Online Analysis of Airborne Tyre Wear Particles During their Formation and Differentiation from Particles of Other Origins" (OLRAP in German), aimed to develop a method to quantify tyre wear particles under various conditions, including driving styles.

Dr. Benjamin Oelze, group leader for test method development at Continental Tires, will present the findings of this study, funded by the German Ministry of Science and Culture.



BKT TO SHOWCASE TYRE SOLUTIONS AT NATIONAL FARM MACHINERY SHOW 2025

BKT will showcase its tyre solutions at the National Farm Machinery Show 2025 in Louisville, Kentucky, from Feb. 12-15.B

At booth 6407, visitors will see a multi-role utility tractor equipped with the AGRIMAX RT 765 tyre. BKT designed this 70 series tire for modern tractors. It is used in heavy applications such as tillage, field and road travel, harvesting, and spraying. Other radial tyres on display include the AW 711 and AGRIMAX SPARGO, designed for transport and tillage activities. The RIB 713 features IF technology and a "D" speed index for fast road transfers, BKT said.

FEATURED BKT TIRE SOLUTIONS AT THE SHOW

BKT will highlight three flagship products at the show:

- **AGRIMAX V-FLECTO:** This tyre maximises load capacity without changing inflation pressure, BKT said. It carries 40% more weight than a standard tyre of the same size and rim. It also reduces soil compaction with a larger footprint and a 10% wider tread profile.



- **RIDEMAX FL 693 M:** Features a D/E-class speed index for higher speeds on road trips, BKT said.
- **AGRIMAXFACTOR:** Recently awarded the

'DLG Approved' quality mark in the "Resources Protection" test module. Available in sizes 600/70 R 30 and 710/70 R 42.

SAILUN SHOWCASES NEW PRODUCTS

At the end of January, Sailun invited 30 tyre dealers from Central and Eastern Europe to conquer the "elements" ice and snow as well as dry and wet roads with the Ice Blazer Alpine 2, the Ice Blazer Alpine Evo 2 and the Atrezzo 4 Seasons Ultra, three brand new products, in one go. Markets participating included Austria, Switzerland, Germany, Belgium, Netherlands, Luxemburg, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Latvia, Moldova, Slovakia, Iceland, Czech Republic, and Montenegro.

The two completely new winter tyres and the also completely new all-season tyre were presented as part of an experience event at the ÖAMTC Driving Technology Center in Saalfelden, Austria.

The location was deliberately chosen because its state-of-the-art infrastructure offers optimal, if not unique, testing and training opportunities for tyre tests under different conditions surrounded by a breathtaking alpine scenery. And at this time of year, this is guaranteed not only on dry and wet roads, but also on snow and ice. In any case, the participants were completely enthusiastic about the many opportunities to extensively test the three innovative new products on site on all four "elements" and to experience their



performance for themselves.

Harry Wang, General Manager of Sailun Tyre Europe: "We are very pleased that our new generation of winter and all-season tyres, which offer further improved safety requirements and optimized performance features in all areas compared to the respective predecessor models, has met with such a positive response from our expert partners and customers. We are sure that this will also be reflected by end users, the drivers on the roads of Europe." Throughout the event, the tyre wholesalers were happy to take advantage of the opportunity not only to talk to each other, but also with the Sailun experts present from the areas of sales, marketing and product management, or simply to talk shop.

With a focus on the product's technical features, as well as insights regarding their testing results in comparison to traditional tier one competitors the new tyres impressed both in theory and reality.

ATREZZO 4 SEASONS ULTRA

Compared to its predecessor, the brand new Atrezzo 4 Seasons Ultra is said to offer even better grip and aquaplaning protection in both summer and winter thanks to its innovative tread design and advanced technologies. Braking distances have also been shortened. In addition mileage has been increased and rolling resistance reduced – without compromising on safety.

BRIDGESTONE ANNOUNCES US\$85 MILLION INVESTMENT TO REINFORCE PREMIUM PASSENGER CAR TYRE PRODUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT IN INDIA

Bridgestone India Private Ltd. (BSID), a subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation (Bridgestone), today announced a strategic growth investment to expand capacity and capability in India. The investment will be directed to the Bridgestone Pune Plant and the Indore Plant to reinforce the company's premium-mass strategy. The collective investment will be approximately US\$85 million with expansion scheduled to start from the beginning of 2025.



These efforts are expected to increase total production capacity at the Pune plant by approximately 1.1 million tyres annually by 2029. They will also improve capability to ensure premium tyre production at the Indore plant. Additionally, BSID will establish a satellite technology center at its Pune plant in 2025 to produce "Dan-Totsu*1 products". These products will be customised optimally for the Indian market with "ENLITEN" technology*2, which is the base technology for product design. This new satellite technology center will reinforce and accelerate the technology development capability of the company's entire engineering chain from material planning to product research / design and

manufacturing for the Indian market.

Bridgestone considers the Indian market to be a growth opportunity for the premium passenger tyre business. Recent trends in the market have produced an outlook of stable economic development and growth in the number of automobiles both owned and produced. BSID aims to enhance its presence in the Indian market and further solidify our position as the market leader by reinforcing and expanding "Dan-Totsu products" equipped with "ENLITEN" technology as the "new premium". The company additionally sees the growing demand as a tailwind for the premium tyre category, including the demand for High Rim Diameter (HRD) tyres*3 and all the other categories over

the mid-long term.

BSID, as a market leader, has been dedicated to motorisation and business development in India. Since it was established as a manufacturing and sales company in 1996, BSID has aimed to contribute to its local market by reinforcing a "produce and sell" system with an axis of on-site service and local production for local sales. Through this latest investment, BSID is accelerating the creation of social and customer value in India by contributing to its local customers, to the development of society, and to the industry. It also advances BSID's strategy of "growth with quality", which maintains a high profitability structure in Indian business while also "furthering its focus on value creation".

SUMITOMO AIMS TO MAKE DUNLOP A 'CORE BRAND' FOLLOWING ACQUISITION

Sumitomo plans to incorporate its Active Tread technology into new Dunlop products. SRI will also focus on OE tires for premium vehicles and motorsports.

After acquiring Goodyear's Dunlop brand for \$701 million, Sumitomo Rubber Industries (SRI) said it plans to make Dunlop a core brand. Also, the manufacturer said it aims to position Dunlop as a premium tyre in the market. It plans to incorporate its Active Tread technology into new Dunlop products. SRI will also focus on OE tires for premium vehicles and motorsports.

ACTIVE TREAD TECHNOLOGY

Sumitomo describes Active Tread as technology enabling rubber to adapt to moisture and temperature changes for better road performance. Sumitomo said that this technology will play a significant role in positioning Dunlop as a premium tyre brand.

STRENGTHENING THE DUNLOP BRAND GLOBALLY

Sumitomo said it aims to grow Dunlop's brand value by combining efforts from its



tyre and sports businesses. It plans to invest in motorsports and global tennis marketing activities to enhance Dunlop's global reputation.

"Our group has a history of acquiring Dunlop in various countries in the 1980s and producing and selling Dunlop tires in Europe, North America and Japan," said Satoru Yamamoto, president and CEO of Sumitomo. "Going forward, we will maximize the potential of the Dunlop brand, not only in the new regions where we have acquired rights, but also in existing regions."

FALKEN BRAND COMPLEMENTS THE STRATEGY

For the Falken brand, Sumitomo said it plans to use its product planning and marketing strengths. It will focus on products appealing

to Falken's core customer base in Europe, North America, and Oceania.

"Through a dual-brand approach to business development, we aim to increase sales volume in each region and raise the proportion of premium products," Sumitomo said in a statement.

DUNLOP ACQUISITION DETAILS

Details of the deal say that SRI will pay approximately \$701 million in cash to Goodyear for the Dunlop brand. That includes a transition fee for brand support, and the purchase of Dunlop tyre inventory. Additional agreements include offtake, licensing, and other arrangements.

The \$701 million includes \$526 million for the Dunlop brand and intellectual property; a \$105 million transition fee; and \$70 million for inventory.

GOODYEAR OTR TYRE BUSINESS SALE TO YOKOHAMA FINALISED

Yokohama Rubber purchased the OTR tire business in an all-cash transaction on Feb. 3, for \$905 million.

The Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company has finalised the previously announced OTR tire business sale. The Yokohama Rubber Company, Limited, purchased the OTR tire business in an all-cash transaction on Feb. 3, for \$905 million.

GOODYEAR OTR TYRE SALE PART OF LONG-TERM Restructuring

"The sale of the OTR business is a significant milestone in Goodyear's transformation," said Goodyear Chief Executive Officer and

President Mark Stewart. "Our portfolio is now more streamlined, driving further efficiencies and enhancing our focus on our core industry-leading products and services."

Goodyear sold its OTR division as part of long-term restructuring efforts. This enables the company to focus more on core business segments, Stewart said. This move improves operational efficiency and supports future growth, Goodyear said in a press release.

Strategic Use of Proceeds

Goodyear says it plans to use proceeds from the sale to reduce leverage and fund initiatives within the Goodyear Forward



transformation plan. By streamlining its portfolio, Goodyear says it strengthens its market position and increases investments in innovation.

Evercore acted as the exclusive financial advisor and Sullivan & Cromwell LLP acted as legal advisor to Goodyear.

POINT S USA LEADERSHIP HIGHLIGHTS SECRETS TO EXPLOSIVE GROWTH STRATEGY

Point S USA's expansion strategy brings the co-op to 405 stores in 34 states, supported by strategic partnerships and focused growth.

Point S USA leaders knew they were being ambitious when revealing their expansion strategy in 2023. The plan was to achieve 500 stores across all 50 states within five years. At the time, the group operated 275 stores in 29 states. Today, less than halfway to the finish line, the group now runs 405 stores in 34 states, including 83 stores added in 2024 alone. This progress includes the acquisition of 50 Peerless Tire locations, marking the largest acquisition in Point S USA history.

During this year's annual dealer meeting, Point S leadership gave Tire Review access to delve deep into the strategic brains of CEO Walter Lybeck, President and COO



Clint Young, and VP of Purchasing Joe Moore. The trio shared insights into the co-op's unique growth plan and how they continue to build a strong foundation for future members. They also weren't afraid to share the challenges they face and their plan of attack to address them head-on.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS DRIVE THE POINT S USA EXPANSION STRATEGY

Leadership says Point S is thriving in large part due to the group's strong supplier partnerships. In 2024, the group collaborated with Platinum Partners on five major promotional campaigns, which helped lead to a 20% year-over-year increase in unit sales. These promotions, supported by Hankook, Nexen, Nokian, and Falken, have helped to drive growth and ensure member competitiveness.

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