

Southern Africa

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ONLINE TYRE PURCHASE

ON THE RISE, BUT IS SA SET TO FOLLOW?



**HOW EVOLUTION WHEEL & TYRE
EVOLVED INTO AN
INDEPENDENT BRAND**

**Take our poll to
have your say!**

TVET Colleges, private
training providers shaping
TEPA's workforce

Premlall to represent tyre sector
in Customs & Excise Key Industry
Management Forum

Two major European
trade shows coordinate
their dates



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Editor's Corner

This year, we are focusing on independent retailers who are building their businesses without the backing of a manufacturer or franchise group, to discover how they are managing to compete in this cut-throat market.

One such retailer is Sameer Ameen Vally, owner and founder of Evolution Wheel & Tyre, - a wholesaler and retailer - based in mid-town Johannesburg. Since Sameer took over the reins from his late father, he continues to find new ways to provide their customers with unparalleled service coupled with products beyond tyres, that appeal to motoring enthusiasts. His story on page 2.

Staying with the retail trade, we delve further into how tyre purchase is evolving around the world, most notably, via e-commerce, which is fast gaining ground over the traditional physical tyre store. Which begs the question, 'is the local market embracing e-commerce to the same degree, and if not, what is holding it back?' Here, we bring

you the opportunity to voice your thoughts on this, via our interactive poll on page 9. For those still reluctant to participate for fear of repercussions, let me assure you, your votes will remain anonymous, but will give us insight into your views and concerns, so that we can address these in future issues. Reach out to us, with your suggestions. We are always happy to listen to your ideas and proposals in our ongoing quest to service the local tyre industry.

April is a time for travel, and if you are taking some time out, be sure your vehicle is roadworthy and your tyres are in good condition. Remember, your tyres are your only contact with the road, so make sure you don't compromise on safety.

Liana



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HOW EVOLUTION WHEEL & TYRE EVOLVED INTO AN INDEPENDENT BRAND

SAMEER AMEEN VALLY ON WHAT IT TAKES TO SUCCEED AS AN INDEPENDENT RETAILER

Among the group of successful independents identified, is Evolution Wheel and Tyre, a Johannesburg-based concern, originally established in 1994 by founder AMEEN VALLY, who at the time, was a certified importer and exporter of wheels and tyres. Subsequently, his son, Sameer Ameen Vally, took the business to the next level, setting up a wholesaling division in a bid to assess the market before embarking on a retail venture.

Sameer tells us about the growth of the operation since then, and lets us in on some company secrets that have served to differentiate them from their competitors.

Tell us about your current operation and the brands and services you provide.

As you well know, the market is under pressure, particularly since Covid-19, with the consumer becoming increasingly more cash-strapped. Price remains the key component to securing the sale, unless the motorist vehicle is on a motor plan.

To add to this, the margins on tyre sales continue to decrease, which is posing massive challenges for retailers countrywide.

With respect to tyres, we offer all the premium brands including Continental and Pirelli, alongside our wide array of imports like Accelera (Indonesia), Kenda (for passenger tyres), Ovation and RoadX (among others). We offer a wide range of alloy wheels ranging from 15inch to 22inch.

Best of all, we are able to custom-make wheels to specific requirements, a specialised service our customers often ask for, and one that gives us the edge in the market.

I see the brands you offer do not originate from China? Does this have anything to do with the stiff anti-dumping duties imposed in 2023?

Frankly, with the anti-dumping duties



in place, buying product from China is still competitive, especially with locally-produced tyres rising in price. The duties have reduced the number of Chinese factories we can source from, but, in my view, there are still opportunities for Chinese tyres in the market and a few of the brands we currently stock are from China

That said, I do not believe tariff wars are healthy. The end user is always the one to bear the burden, as the extra investment needs to be recouped from the consumer.

“

Best of all, we are able to custom-make wheels to specific requirements, a specialised service our customers often ask for, and one that gives us the edge in the market.

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We have created an online purchase platform where customers can order their tyres for direct delivery.

”

Do you offer any ancillary services?

We do, yes. One of our top seller is car audio systems, which we supply and install at our premises.

And what has really propelled the business forward is our superior service and keeping ahead of the conventional fitment center by creating an online purchase platform where customers can order their tyres for direct delivery, either to their workplace or home. We offer a nationwide delivery service, to make tyre purchase and replacement as convenient as possible. From there, the customer can visit their nearest fitment centre to have the tyres, fitted, balanced and for their vehicle to undergo wheel alignment.

Are you aligned to certain fitment centres around the country?

Not as yet, but we are certainly heading in

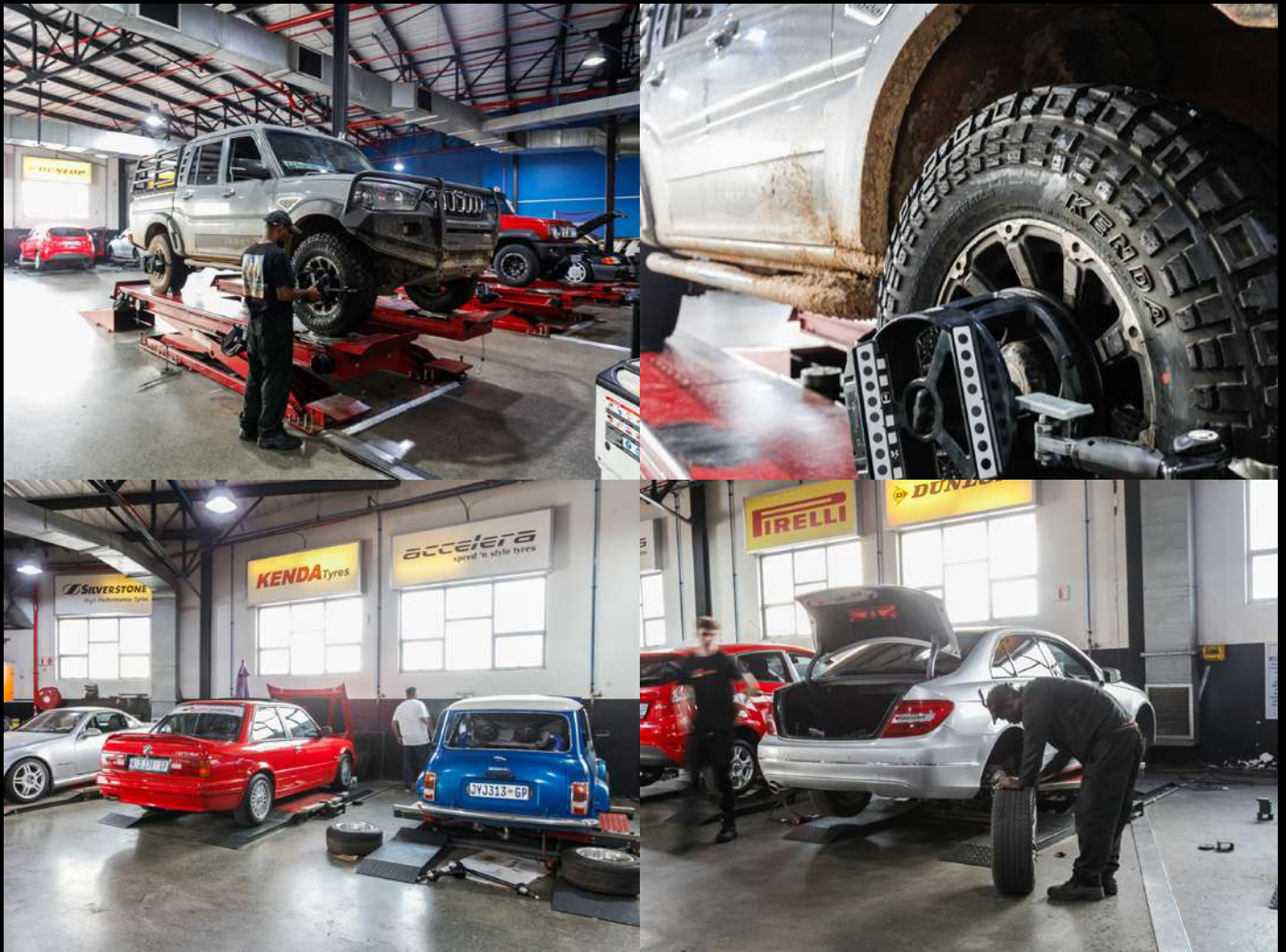
that direction. We are hoping to come to an agreement with strategically-located fitment partners, embracing a model of a profit-share scheme that will benefit both parties.

The challenge for us, as wholesalers and retailers, is that some fitment centres could regard us as opposition, but what we are hoping to create for those who are interested, is quite the opposite.

How are you managing to deliver product across the country? I take it you do not necessarily use your own vehicles for this?

We sub-contract our deliveries out to reputable courier houses, with whom we have established close relationships over the years. And for products that exceed R1000.00 in value, we deliver for free.

For the time being, this is working for us.



This business model is certainly an unorthodox one in this market. Would you consider introducing dedicated mobile service vans at some point?

We have been debating over this, but the logistical and security challenges that exist in South Africa require careful consideration. It is not a decision that can be made lightly.

For now, we are focusing on growing our online tyre platform, which we believe will see some steady growth in line with international trends. We want to capitalise on this opportunity to make tyre purchases easy and convenient for the consumer.

What else do you believe differentiates you from your competitors?

Our philosophy is to provide our customers (especially the ladies), with a pristine, premium space (the slow lounge), in which they can connect to the wifi or simply relax over bottomless coffee or tea.

We further strive to cater for all LSMs and brands, despite low-end sizes generating little by way of profit margins.

Moreover, our general manager has amassed 25 years-experience in servicing vehicles and uses his knowledge to modify suspensions, something we have become known for. Over and above this, we offer aircon re-gassing, window tinting essential services the consumer is always in need of.

Today, selling tyres alone is simply not sustainable. As retailers, we need to focus on as many ancillary services as possible, to augment profit margins.

We also like to challenge ourselves by showcasing our brands and their capabilities in outdoor events. Recently, we modified two older vehicles that were in bad shape, overhauling the engine and suspension, and fitting them with our very own exclusive brand Accelera, in order to navigate the treacherous Sani Pass, one of the most dangerous roads in the country.

Suffice to say, Accelera proved its mettle in the Evolution Rally Challenge, conclusively proving its robust construction and overall durability against some of the leading competitor tyre brands in the 4x4 market.

We want more car enthusiasts and



motorists to experience the quality and reliability of our tyres, not to mention the mileage, which when maintained correctly, can deliver up to 80 000km.

Another exciting initiative we offer is the ability to provide the consumer with a full vehicle assessment, should they be experiencing irregular wear, vibration and the like. We do this by employing dedicated diagnostic technology.

In short, we are constantly thinking of ways for the business to keep on evolving and upping our margins. We also believe strongly that investing in the latest equipment and technology is what sets us apart from our competitors.

What would you say is a major challenge for the business in your specific area?

Primarily, the growing number of informal traders that are regularly sprouting all around us. Most of them do not have proper fitting equipment, are not audited, and often do not conform to the legal frameworks that we as formal businesses need to conform to. As such, they are able to sell product a lot cheaper. As credible operators, we struggle to compete with them.

You currently have the one outlet in Johannesburg City Centre. Correct? Are you looking to expand beyond this?

Yes, we have one retail outlet, a wholesaling division as well as warehouses in Johannesburg and Cape Town. As for expanding, we have been toying with a possible franchise model, but a final decision on this has not been made.

Rolling out additional stores will depend on finding suitable partners in other locations, that share our business ethos and values.

“

We have the ability to provide a full vehicle assessment to diagnose the cause of irregular wear, vibration etc.

”



ONLINE TYRE PURCHASE

ON THE RISE, BUT IS SA SET TO FOLLOW?

There is no getting away from it. E-commerce is growing exponentially. Driven by a younger demographic and consumer preference for convenience, online purchase is fast becoming a way of life, even for items that may not typically fit the traditional 'mould' (pun fully intended) – tyres being one such example.

The United States replacement tyre market has experienced a 45 percent growth in online tyre sales over the last three years, while the number of units sold at physical stores declined by 11 percent. This, according to Circana, (formerly IRI) and The NPD Group. So much so, in fact, that e-commerce now represents 14 percent of all replacement tyre sales, up from 9 percent in 2019.

Similarly, online tyre sales are growing in both the United Kingdom and Europe, driven by convenience, a wider selection and the increasing popularity of online shopping. The increasing adoption of electric vehicles that require specialised tyres, readily found online, is another significant contributor.

In line with the global trend, the shift towards e-commerce in the tyre market is expanding and is expected to continue growing, with online sales projected to increase rapidly in Europe, potentially doubling to 20 percent of sales within the next few years – largely driven by factors like the rise in EVs, demand for high-performance tyres and advancements in tyre technology.

The ease and convenience of online shopping are major factors driving this growth, allowing consumers to access a wider range of brands and models from the comfort of their homes. The trend is expected to continue, with online tyre buying gradually evolving towards a 'buy and fit' model, potentially using mobile technology to streamline the process.

Interestingly too, the average price of a tyre sold online has increased 54 percent over the past three years, compared to a 32 percent in-store increase. While economic price elevations have played a role, variations in product mix are contributing to some of the spending trends developing across retail, Circana says.

And, according to www.tirereview.com, low-income consumers, in particular, are seeking value and stretching their car care needs and maintenance-related dollars to offset the pinch they are feeling from rising grocery prices, thereby driving them to explore the internet for deals.

While convenience is the biggest

motivator for online tyre buying, the internet marketplace lets customers compare costs from various retailers, while also providing competitive prices and special discounts, that attract budget-conscious customers.

E-commerce platforms like Amazon and eBay have expanded their product offerings to include tyres, taking advantage of their vast logistics networks and large consumer bases, to capture a significant market share.

Prominent tyre manufacturers such as Michelin, Goodyear and Bridgestone in the US have also entered the e-commerce industry, selling directly to customers via their websites, says www.tirereview.com.

Moreover, newer entrants, such as Blackcircles, have developed novel business strategies, such as local garage partnerships and mobile installation services, to improve the convenience of online tyre shopping.

WHAT HAPPENED TO BLACKCIRCLES SA?

Blackcircles – an online tyre retailer, founded in 2001 by Scottish entrepreneur, Mike Welch, who eventually sold to manufacturing giant Michelin, in 2015, has rapidly expanded its presence across the globe.

In 2021, Blackcircles entered the South African market, operating under parent company Sumitomo Rubber South Africa, but its presence here, was short-lived. In September 2024, the company announced that it was ceasing operations in South Africa.

According to Sumitomo Rubber, their Blackcircles division experienced various challenges, among them, initially ensuring visibility in the e-commerce space. That said, SRSA said the decision to close Blackcircles was a result of various factors, not necessarily relating to the readiness or receptivity of the South African market to online tyre purchasing.

"We still believe e-commerce has an important role to play in the market and have taken on board valuable insights and learnings through this experience," SRSA. The tyre maker added that the prospect of Blackcircles returning to South Africa, was not out of the question.

QUICKTYRE ENTERS THE MARKET

Meanwhile, we are seeing new entrants to the online tyre purchasing platform, with ambitious

plans to capture the e-commerce tyre space. Durban-based QuickTyre, which began operations in 2022, is one such example.

Utilising a fresh approach, the developers of QuickTyre have come up with an ingenious scheme that not only allows consumers to compare prices and pay for their tyre purchase online, but simultaneously enables them to book a specific time with a dealer of their choice, to fit them, thereby alleviating much of the frustration and waiting times associated with tyre replacement.

More important, the transaction belongs exclusively to the dealer. "We do not sell tyres," says Jared Krause, "we are simply a conduit between the consumer and the dealer. Prices and services are set

The internet marketplace lets customers compare costs from various retailers, while also providing competitive prices and special discounts.



The QuickTyre online platform is fast gaining traction with the consumer.



by each dealer at their discretion. We are a tech company (albeit with loads of tyre knowledge and experience) and our focus is on that part of things – making the best experience. Any new business originating from our online platform belongs to the dealer, with QuickTyre only generating a small administrative fee from each sale”.

Since its inception in 2022, QuickTyre confirms its platform is fast gaining traction, proving popular with today's consumer who can now compare tyre prices quickly and efficiently, alleviating the need to shop around.

One dealer currently signed up to QuickTyre, claims the platform has generated hundreds of new leads for his shop, and that this exposure alone, is sufficient motivation for them to belong to the online platform.

QuickTyre says their objective is to grow the platform to include the participation of a greater number of dealers countrywide and further rolling out other versions of its software with leading retail groups.

“Tyre purchase is a grudge purchase, as it is,” says Erik Aissing “Finding a way to streamline the transaction for the consumer, can ease some of the resentment traditionally associated with forking out for tyre replacement.

Of course, while online tyre purchase may benefit the consumer, some dealers argue it is damaging to the trade, especially in South Africa, where market players are used to the traditional, less transparent business model of in-store buying.

When a similar online tyre comparison tyre purchasing platform - ‘I Want Tyres’ -was ready to launch some years ago, retail groups were

outraged, viewing its inception a massive threat, with consumers who would now be privy to their competitors’ pricing. Suffice to say, I Want Tyres met its inevitable demise, before it could begin to offer the motorist the option to compare tyre prices, pay and book online.

In the months and years that followed, franchise groups and manufacturers set up their own individual online tyre purchasing websites, but these online platforms were dedicated exclusively to their products and services. This is not necessarily what the consumer wants. They want to be able to choose between brands, sizes, locations and most of all, prices.

Which begs the question: “Can the South African retailer afford not to be an active player in the e-commerce online tyre space, given the evolution of the global market”?



What are your thoughts? Let us know by taking our interactive poll on page 9 >>

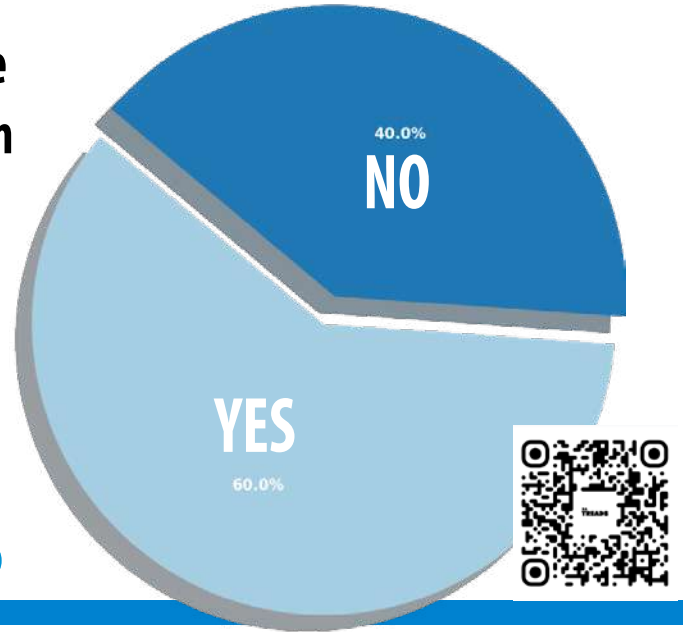
*According to the SATMC, stats pertaining to the sale of tyres online in South Africa, are not available at this time.



In our previous issue, we asked...

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

HERE ARE THE RESULTS...



HAVE YOUR SAY....

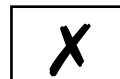
Can the South African retailer afford not to be an active player in the e-commerce online tyre space, given the evolution of the global market?



CLICK HERE TO VOTE



YES



NO




Written By: Angie Frederic
(TEPA National Training
Committee Chairperson)

The Essential Role of TVET Colleges and Private Training Providers in Shaping TEPA's workforce



TEPA

Proud Association of 

This article explores the pivotal role of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and private training institutions in shaping South Africa's workforce, particularly within the Tyre, Equipment & Parts Association (TEPA), a constituent association of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI). Amidst the country's economic challenges, unlike traditional academic routes, these institutions play a crucial role in equipping students with essential practical skills and industry specific knowledge making them highly employable in various trades and technical fields. TVETs and private trainers are the backbone of industry, equipping the workforce to meet current demands and future challenges with confidence.

South Africa's economy is a complex tapestry of ambition and occasional setbacks. Amidst the challenges of load-shedding and infrastructure issues, Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges and private training institutions are quietly addressing our workforce needs.

For the Tyre, Equipment & Parts Association (TEPA), TVET colleges are vital for many young people who have been told, "Nee, jy kan nie!" by traditional academic pathways. With a government target to enrol 2.5 million TVET students by 2030 (Sibiya & Nyembezi, 2018), these institutions provide practical skills - from automotive repair to mechanical engineering - that are essential for keeping industries like

ours operational. Need a skilled technician to service your vehicle or install new equipment? You can thank a TVET graduate. Governed by the Continuing Education Act (Training, 2015), their focus on vocational training bridges the gap between "I passed matric" and "I can actually do this job."

Private training institutions, meanwhile also fill a critical gap with their dynamic, innovative, and quick to adapt ethos. They offer short courses in everything from advanced diagnostics to sustainable practices in automotive care, often tailored to South Africa's unique challenges.

Of course, it's not all smooth sailing. Colleges sometimes struggle to align curricula with advances in the sector but a number of

initiatives are in place to try and bridge that gap. Initiatives like the partnership with the Chamber of Crafts Erfurt, also more popularly known as Handwerkskammer Erfurt (HWK Erfurt) and with Porsche AG, are critical to upskill lecturers. In a country where "youth unemployment" is a persistent issue, we need all hands on deck.

In celebrating TVETs and private trainers, we recognise them as the dependable workhorses of South Africa's education system and the backbone that keeps our industries moving forward. By equipping TEPA's workforce with essential skills, they ensure that we are not just prepared for today's challenges, but also ready to navigate the road ahead with confidence and competence.

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Nepoworx: Empowering South Africa's Future Through Solar Energy Training

At the forefront of South Africa's renewable energy revolution stands Nepoworx, an institution founded by visionary CEO Nonjabulo Sokhela in 2016. Dedicated to upskilling and reskilling individuals in solar technology, Nepoworx is not just about generating energy but about generating opportunities for a sustainable future.

"Solar technology is not just about harnessing sunlight – it is about capturing the promise of a sustainable future, one kilowatt at a time," says Sokhela. Through her leadership, Nepoworx has become a driving force in providing training and access to the solar energy sector, aligning every facet of the organisation with strategic goals focused on sustainability and inclusivity.

Nepoworx, an accredited training and assessment centre, is committed to uplifting marginalised groups, including women, youth and men in remote, disadvantaged communities. "Our focus on solar technology is driven by the abundant job opportunities it offers, enabling us to empower individuals for a fair energy transition while addressing issues like unemployment, poverty and inequality," explains Sokhela.

One of Nepoworx's flagship programmes, the Renewable Energy Programme, trains youth as Solar Photovoltaic Service Technicians. This initiative, co-funded by the merSETA, marks a significant step towards empowering South Africa's youth with the skills to thrive in a rapidly growing sector. With a three-month programme structure, the first cohort of 20 students started in September 2022, and plans are underway to expand to 60 trainees across multiple cohorts.

While Nepoworx has made remarkable strides, challenges remain in identifying candidates with foundational knowledge in electricity. However, through targeted outreach and partnerships, they have successfully recruited passionate individuals eager to embark on a career in renewable energy.

Looking ahead, Nepoworx has ambitious goals to train 900 individuals over four years, fuelling job creation, GDP growth and solidifying South Africa's position as a leader in renewable energy. "Our long-term plan involves fostering entrepreneurship and supporting startups within the renewable energy sector," Sokhela shares, underscoring her vision for a thriving green economy.



Nepoworx is not just about skills development; it's about fostering a sustainable future, empowering individuals and communities, and building pathways to a greener tomorrow. With innovation and collaboration, Nepoworx is lighting the way for South Africa's renewable energy future.

PREMLALL APPOINTED TO CUSTOMS AND EXCISE KEY INDUSTRY MANAGEMENT FORUM COMMITTEE (KIMF) REPRESENTING THE TYRE SECTOR

The Tyre, Equipment, Parts Association (TEPA), a constituent association of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI), is proud to announce the appointment of Vishal Premall, TEPA National Director, to the newly established Customs and Excise Key Industry Management Forum (KIMF). Premall will represent the tyre sector alongside key stakeholders from the South African Tyre Manufacturers Conference (SATMC) and the Tyre Importers Association of South Africa (TIASA).

The KIMF is a newly launched standalone forum initiated by the South African Revenue Service (SARS) and governed by a formal Terms of Reference (TOR). It aims to promote collaboration between SARS and industry stakeholders on regulatory, operational, and strategic issues affecting specific sectors.

As a representative of TEPA and the broader tyre sector, Premall will play a vital role in several key focus areas within the forum. His involvement will contribute to

addressing customs and excise risk by helping to identify and mitigate risks within the tyre industry's value chain, particularly around valuation fraud and tariff misclassification, ensuring improved compliance with the Customs and Excise Act.

The committee will also be involved in developing systemic solutions which will involve working collaboratively to identify systemic gaps and develop solutions that improve the import and export processes impacting the tyre sector. Finally Premall will also play an important role in sharing practical insights and industry experience to support SARS in achieving regulatory efficiency and improving trade facilitation.

His appointment underscores TEPA's commitment to ensuring that the voice of the tyre sector is actively represented in key policy and regulatory discussions, and that industry concerns are addressed through open, transparent, and results-driven dialogue.

"We are proud to have Premall take up this important role," says Johann van der Merwe, TEPA National Chairman. "His expertise and in-depth understanding of the tyre sector will undoubtedly add significant value to the forum's objectives."



Vishal Premall

The formation of the KIMF represents a meaningful step toward enhanced collaboration between SARS and the tyre industry, setting the foundation for improved compliance, operational efficiency, and fair trade practices.

HI-Q TYRES & AUTOCARE OPENS A NEW STORE IN POTCHEFSTROOM (HI-Q POTCHEFSTROOM)

Hi-Q were thrilled with the grand opening of the new store that took place on Monday, March 3 at 87 Nelson Mandela Drive, Potchefstroom.

Shareholders André Bal, Milandi Visser, Johan Visser (unfortunately Johan could not attend), Annelize Coetzee, Johan Coetzee and the team, are eagerly waiting to welcome customers with premium products and top-notch services, ensuring every vehicle stays in top shape.

As André passionately puts it, "We are taking the tyre fitment retail service to the next level. We'll offer more than your average fitment centre!"

National Operations Manager, Adri Koegelenberg shares, "This new store in Potchefstroom represents our dedication to expanding our reach and providing exceptional service to our customers. We are confident that André and his team will deliver an outstanding experience."

This opening represents not just a new



location, but a collective achievement in their ongoing journey towards excellence.

We encourage you to join us in celebrating this milestone and embracing the spirit of togetherness that defines the Hi-Q network. Whenever you find yourself in the area, please visit Hi-Q Potchefstroom and take a moment to meet the team.

Suppliers and exhibitors such as Goodyear, Dixon, Falken, Monroe, CEAT and Pedders took this

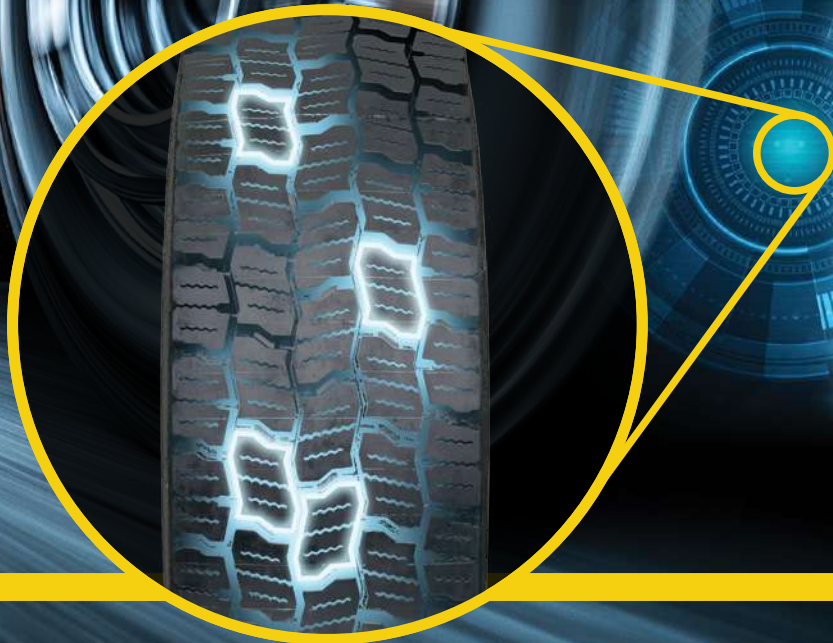
as a golden opportunity to display their products.

Simoné Esterhuizen was the first customer for the day. She had a flat tyre and said, "Everyone was so friendly with me. I even got earphones for being the first customer. I would recommend Hi-Q to everybody."

The group claims this latest addition to the Hi-Q network is a testament to its unwavering commitment to grow our footprint and serve communities across the country.

"The Bandag Challenge"

”



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TEPA FITMENT CENTRES GEAR UP FOR THE EV REVOLUTION



As the global automotive industry shifts into a greener, electrified future, South African fitment centres stand at a critical crossroads: adapt or risk falling behind. The road ahead is undeniably electric, and in a world where change is the only constant, the true competitive edge lies in adaptability. For those in the automotive aftermarket, the journey has already begun and the time to prepare is now.

The Tyre, Equipment and Parts Association (TEPA), a proud association of the Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI), says the rise of electric vehicles (EVs) presents not just a technical challenge, but an exciting business opportunity for forward-thinking fitment centres.

According to Dylan Petzer, National Vice-Chairperson of TEPA, "We're standing at the start of one of the biggest transitions the sector has seen in over a century. EVs are not just coming – they're already here. For local fitment centres, the time to gear up is now," he says.

Transitioning to EV servicing requires a fundamental shift in both mindset and operations. Fitment centres must invest

in high-voltage diagnostic tools, safety equipment, and charging infrastructure.

"Traditional tools and equipment still have their place," says Petzer, "but they need to be complemented by sophisticated diagnostic scanners, battery testing systems, and insulated gear designed specifically for high-voltage environments." Examples include Level III-certified EV diagnostic scanners, high-voltage multimeters (CAT III or IV rated), battery analysis systems, and arc-flash-rated PPE such as gloves, face shields and safety boots. Safety signage and designated EV zones are also vital for any technicians working in the area.

In terms of the fitment centre infrastructure, Petzer highlights the need for proper ventilation systems to manage battery off-gassing and emergency thermal events, as well as charging stations with real-time monitoring and shut-off capabilities.

The shift to EVs means upskilling is non-negotiable. "Even the most experienced technicians need to become students again," says Petzer. "We're not just replacing parts anymore – we're diagnosing rolling computers."

While TEPA is currently developing its own EV technician training programme, fitment

centres are encouraged to pursue in-house training offered by OEMs and manufacturers in the interim. These courses cover essential safety protocols, system diagnostics, and battery management – equipping technicians with the knowledge to work confidently and safely on EVs.

"Training isn't a cost—it's an investment in your future relevance and reputation," adds Petzer.

Outfitting a fitment centre for EV doesn't come cheap however. Petzer says workshops should expect to invest between R400,000 and R1 million in equipment and infrastructure upgrades, with technician training costs estimated at R100,000 to R200,000 per person. "But the return is worth it," he says. "Fitment Centres that embrace this change are positioning themselves at the forefront of a fast-growing market."

TEPA believes that with the right planning and support, even smaller fitment centres can begin their EV journey gradually – starting with basic safety training and equipment, then expanding as demand grows.

Petzer concludes, "You don't need to overhaul your entire fitment centre overnight. Start small. Invest in the right tools, prioritise safety, and equip your team with the knowledge to grow."

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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.

CONTINENTAL DOMINATES

SUMMER TYRE TEST BY EUROPEAN AUTOMOBILE CLUBS

In their latest summer tyre test, the German automobile club ADAC, the Austrian ÖAMTC and the Swiss TCS awarded Continental's SportContact 7 the top grades "good" (ADAC and ÖAMTC: 1.8) and "highly recommended" (TCS: 74 percent). The European automobile clubs tested a total of 18 models from international brands in size 225/40 R 18. The test vehicle was a VW Golf.

"With the prestigious victory in the ADAC tyre test, the SportContact 7 seamlessly continues the test successes of previous years. Since its market launch in 2021, the tyre has already won 14 independent press tests," says Continental tire expert Andreas Schlenke.

The SportContact 7 impresses with top performance on wet and dry roads. On dry asphalt, Continental's UHP tyre shows "very good steering wheel feedback and is absolutely safe and precisely controllable even at the limit, thanks to its very high grip level," and it also secures the best rating in the field in the wet.

In terms of braking distances on wet asphalt, the SportContact 7 set the best mark with just 28.4 meters from 80 km/h; on dry roads, the test car came to a standstill after 35.2 meters from 100 km/h. "The shortest braking distances in the comparison and absolutely safe and easily controllable on the wet handling course," was the ADAC's further verdict on the SportContact 7.

"The Continental SportContact 7 sets the benchmark in terms of driving safety with a very good rating and achieves the best overall rating in the test thanks to its



good performance in the environmental balance", judges the ADAC. With its "low wear" and "good efficiency" as well as the "best score in the test for sustainability", the SportContact 7 achieves a "good" in the "environmental balance" category, which accounts for 30 percent of the total score.

SportContact 7 is the ideal tyre for high performance sporty vehicles with electric

and conventional drive systems. It is approved for several models such as Porsche Panamera, BRABUS ROCKET GTS and BMW 5 Series and i5. It is available in sizes from 18 to 24 inches. During development, Continental focused on perfection in all performance criteria in order to combine maximum driving pleasure with maximum safety.

MILLIONS OF UK TYRES MEANT FOR RECYCLING SENT TO FURNACES IN INDIA



Millions of tyres being sent from the UK to India for recycling are actually being “cooked” in makeshift furnaces causing serious health problems and huge environmental damage, the BBC has discovered.

The majority of the UK’s exported waste tyres are sold into the Indian black market, and this is well known within the industry, BBC File on 4 Investigates has been told.

“I don’t imagine there’s anybody in the industry that doesn’t know it’s happening,” says Elliot Mason, owner of one of the biggest tyre recycling plants in the UK.

Campaigners and many of those in the industry – including the Tyre Recovery Association (TRA) – say the government knows the UK is one of the worst offenders for exporting waste tyres for use in this way.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has told us it has strict controls on exporting waste tyres, including unlimited fines and jail time.

The shipments went on an eight-week journey and eventually arrived in an Indian port, before being driven 800 miles cross-country, to a cluster of soot-covered compounds beside a small village.

Drone footage, taken in India and shared with the BBC, showed the tyres reaching a compound – where thousands were waiting to be thrown into huge furnaces to undergo pyrolysis.

Many UK businesses will bale tyres and send them to India because it is more profitable and investing in shredding machinery is expensive, according to Mr Mason.



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NEW NOKIAN TYRES ROMANIAN FACTORY STARTS TYRE DELIVERIES



Nokian Tyres is starting tyre deliveries from its new factory in Oradea, Romania. The first deliveries through Nokian Tyres distribution centers to Central European customers and consumers include winter and all-season tyres. The Romania factory is strategically located close to Central and South European consumers and customers, and it will focus on manufacturing passenger car tyres sold to these markets. The factory is the world's first full-scale zero CO2 emission tyre factory with all energy generated without fossil fuels and utilises the most modern technology to produce tyres.

"This week marks the start of the tyre deliveries from our factory in Oradea, Romania. The first truck loaded with

Oradea made tyres left from the factory taking the tyres to our distribution centers and later to our customer and consumers in Central and South Europe. The factory, which is the world's first full-scale zero CO2 emission tyre factory, will strengthen our ability to serve our consumers and customers in Central and South Europe and beyond and support our growth.

Reaching this milestone in less than two years from the Groundbreaking of the factory is a significant achievement for us and I am very proud of the Nokian Tyres team who has worked hard to make this possible. I also want to thank all partners and Romanian officials who have helped us along the way," says Paolo Pompei, President and CEO of Nokian Tyres.

The first new passenger car tyre range produced in Romania

The company recently launched the Nokian Tyres Seasonproof 2, the first passenger car tyre range produced in the Romania factory. The all-season tyre range includes sizes for modern passenger cars, SUVs and CUV's available for Central and South European consumers by autumn 2025. Providing excellent grip on snow and slush, the tyre also delivers exceptional performance and a smooth driving experience in summer. Nokian Tyres Seasonproof 2 has a share of up to 38% renewable, recycled and ISCC PLUS certified materials*. It is the company's first tyre in commercial production with such a high share of renewable and recycled materials. In the coming months and years, the company will launch new products for drivers in Central and South Europe produced in Romania.

MICHELIN PRESENTS THE TYRE MARKET'S EVOLUTION AND ITS PLANTS TRANSFORMATION

Michelin chose its industrial facility in Cuneo, Italy, the largest car tyre factory in western Europe and one of the most modern, to organise the first edition of its International Media Day, devoted to two strategic transformations for the Group.

On this occasion, Michelin highlighted its environmental commitment, in particular its goal of achieving 100% sustainable materials in its tyres by 2050.

In this context, Michelin is a key player in supporting the tire market's main trends:

1. Increasing tyre sizes as a result of heavier vehicles. This trend has a direct effect on consumption and CO2 emissions in the context of global warming and resource scarcity. Michelin is responding to this paradox with technology. The reduction in rolling resistance in its products has, for example, allowed for savings of 3.4 billion liters of fuel over tyres' life span in 2021, thereby preventing 8.7 million metric tons of CO2 compared to 2010. Michelin will continue its efforts through 2030, improving this energy efficiency by 10% (Michelin data).

2. All-season tyre strong development in Europe: the all-season tyre, long shunned by drivers on this continent, has seen a remarkable success in Europe, with sales multiplied threefold over the last few years. This tyre is indeed recognised for its ease of use and remarkable performance through technological breakthroughs developed by Michelin in particular. On this market, the Group anticipates growth of more than 11% over the next five years.

Several factors contributed to this success:

- global warming and the occurrence of unpredictable snowy weather;
- changes in European regulations;



- advantages for consumers who avoid needing two sets of tyres;
- the development of vehicle fleets and leasing.

3. The electric boom. With the development of electric vehicles, tyres take center stage.

In fact, the performance and constraints of electric vehicles make much greater demands on tyres than combustion engine vehicles.

FACTORIES ENGAGED IN AN IN-DEPTH TRANSFORMATION

This first International Media Day also reviews the transformations currently undertaken in the Group's factories. For several years, the Group has been engaged in a triple revolution on its production sites:

- A human revolution with profound questions on meaning, organization, and

- A technological revolution, with the generalised use of data and digital technologies.
- An environmental revolution, with the pressing need to reconcile economic activity and sustainable development.

Human factories: stemming from its leadership model, Michelin has launched an ambitious work transformation around the concept of empowerment, which is thriving today. Michelin has been developing this breakthrough managerial innovation in its factories for 15 years, to improve production teams' work. Today this in-depth change is contributing to the factories' better economic performance especially in responding to the challenge of industrial professions' attractiveness.

THE TIRE COLOGNE AND AUTOPROMOTEC COORDINATE THEIR DATES



Autopromotec will take place from 21 to 24 May 2025 THE TIRE COLOGNE will be held from 9 to 11 June 2026.

THE TIRE COLOGNE (TTC) and Autopromotec in Bologna, the two leading trade fairs for the tyre trade, workshop outfitting and the automotive aftermarket in Europe, have once again coordinated their dates and are returning to the proven alternating rhythm: TTC will take place in even years, Autopromotec in odd years. With this decision, both organisers do justice to the wish of exhibitors and visitors to avoid overlaps and be able to optimally use the market potential of both events. The coordinated strategy extends the reach of both trade fairs, reinforces international synergies and opens up new business possibilities.

Future-oriented themes like sustainability, digitalisation and electromobility play an ever increasing role in both industries. Thanks to the harmonised scheduling, these key themes can be addressed in a more targeted fashion, and market participants can be provided with more comprehensive insights and networking possibilities.

The close cooperation underlines the importance of both trade fairs as leading platforms for innovations and industry trends – with clear added value for exhibitors, visitors and the entire industry. The mutual stand exchange thereby serves as a visible sign and as evidence of this cooperation in a spirit of partnership.

TTC statement:

‘The close coordination of event dates between THE TIRE COLOGNE and

Autopromotec is an important step towards offering our exhibitors and visitors the best possible planning security and market potential. The clear division into even and odd years creates synergies, strengthens international networking and enables us to address key industry topics in a targeted manner’, explains Christoph Werner, Senior Vice President Trade Fair Management

Autopromotec statement:

Renzo Servadei, Autopromotec CEO states: ‘We strongly believe that this renewed partnership will allow our sector to optimise participation in both trade fairs. While targeting almost the same audience in the tyre sector, the complementarity of the two exhibitions remains fundamental and we intend to enhance this.’

CONTINENTAL'S ULTRACONTACT NXT WINS SUSTAINABILITY AWARD IN AUTOMOTIVE 2025



Continental's UltraContact NXT has won the Sustainability Award in Automotive 2025 in the category "Technology – Materials / Raw Materials, Recycling". The international management consultancy Arthur D. Little and the German automotive technology magazines of the ATZ / MTZ Group honored Continental for its most sustainable series tyre to date. Depending on the tyre size, the UltraContact NXT has a share of up to 65 percent renewable, recycled and ISCC PLUS mass balance certified materials.

"With the UltraContact NXT, Continental shows that a combination of outstanding sustainability and first-class performance

works," said Maria Hanczuch, Head of Product Management for Passenger Tyres in Europe, the Middle East and Africa (EMEA) at Continental, who accepted the award in Berlin. "We see the Sustainability Award in Automotive not only as an honour, but also as an incentive to consistently pursue our sustainability strategy."

Continental launched the UltraContact NXT in summer 2023. With up to 65 percent renewable, recycled and mass balance certified materials, the tyre combines a high level of sustainable materials with maximum safety and performance.

The UltraContact NXT contains up to 32 percent renewable materials. These include resins based on residual materials

from the paper and wood industries and silica from the ash of rice husks. Up to five percent is recycled material, such as recycled steel or polyester from recycled PET bottles, which often ends up in incinerators or landfills. Continental also uses up to 28 percent ISCC PLUS mass balance certified materials. These are sustainable synthetic rubber and carbon black made from biobased, bio-circular and/or circular feedstock.

UltraContact NXT has already won several awards since its launch, including the Sustainability Award at the Swiss Automotive Show Innovation Awards 2023, the International Design Award 2023, the German Innovation Award 2024 and the CLEPA Innovation Award 2024.

GOODYEAR ANNOUNCES A VINTAGE BLIMP DESIGN FOR ITS 100TH ANNIVERSARY



In celebration of the Goodyear Blimp's 100th anniversary this year, the company today announced that its blimp Wingfoot One will fly with an entirely new look inspired by Goodyear's very first branded blimp Pilgrim.

The company's iconic airship is being re-wrapped with a black and silver color scheme, including a vintage Goodyear logo on the sides and a reappearance of the blue and yellow Goodyear "house flag" that donned the side of the company's earliest blimps. The new design is intended to surprise and delight fans of the Goodyear Blimp and serve as a visual representation of the airship's 100-year history that will spark conversations about this significant milestone throughout the remainder of the year. Goodyear's other blimps will maintain their current blue and yellow design.

"Bringing back the look of Goodyear's first branded blimp is a fitting tribute as we mark our 100th anniversary," said Laura Duda, Goodyear's senior vice president and Chief Communications Officer. "The vintage design pays homage to the rich history of the Goodyear Blimp and is intended to evoke a sense of nostalgia and excitement among our fans as we celebrate this year."

The vintage wrap process takes several weeks to complete. Once applied, Wingfoot One will make its first public appearance this year dressed as Pilgrim, and Goodyear wants fans to guess where it will show up first.

Goodyear Blimps have a long history of making aerial appearances at the biggest events, from the World Series to the Olympics and Academy Awards. Fans are encouraged to tag @GoodyearBlimp on social media with their best guess and follow the accounts for hints along the way.

CELEBRATING 100 YEARS

Goodyear recognises June 3, 2025, as the official date of the blimp's 100th anniversary. Goodyear Blimp fans can participate in this exciting milestone by following along with the blimp's 100+ city tour on GoodyearBlimp.com and on social media to watch for opportunities to see the larger-than-life icon up close as it travels the country for aerial appearances throughout the year. 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.

HUNTER ENGINEERING UNVEILS TCX53PRO TYRE CHANGER



Hunter Engineering has introduced the TCX53Pro tyre changer, merging the TCXH chassis with its hybrid leverless head. This new machine enhances productivity while maintaining a familiar swing-arm format, Hunter said.

FEATURES AND DESIGN OF THE TCX53PRO TYRE CHANGER

Hunter said it built the TCX53Pro tyre changer to handle demanding fitments, from 19.5 in. to EV tires. Its locking lower disc and dual upper press rollers allow for greater control during tyre changes.

The hybrid leverless tool head features a tilting lip that holds the bead in place during demounting. A rounded profile minimizes the risk of tyre damage, while the polymer winged head eliminates the need for protective inserts. This design ensures the bead remains secure during mounting, Hunter said.

INCREASED POWER AND EFFICIENCY

Weighing more than other tyre changers in its class, the TCX53Pro provides more rigidity and delivers up to 50% higher torque, according to the company. This added power increases speed and reduces unnecessary movement, making it an ideal tool for various tyre and wheel assemblies.

Designed to handle performance OE cars, trucks, and SUVs, the TCX53Pro makes changing advanced tyre setups easier, Hunter said. The locking lower arm simplifies the demounting of heavy, stiff, or wide tyres, while the upper roller can lock or freewheel to assist in different situations.

ENHANCED CLAMPING AND BEAD-BREAKING CAPABILITIES

The TCX53Pro tyre changer features a table-top design with a clamping range of 10 to 28 inches. It also includes a PowerOut bead

breaker and operates with a 220V two-speed rotation system, ensuring maximum efficiency.

"The new TCX53Pro is a unique combination of premium features in a time-tested, familiar format," said Jim Hudson, product manager for Hunter. "The hybrid head and lower locking disc make it much easier and safer to change tough tyres on a simple, rugged swing arm tire changer. It's a great mash-up of power, speed simplicity and safety that makes it a great machine for almost every shop—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".

KUMHO TIRE REPORTS RECORD SALES AND PROFITS IN 2024



The tyre manufacturer experienced a 12.1% increase in sales and a 43.2% rise in operating profit compared to 2023.

Kumho Tire reported sales of \$3.3 billion and an operating profit of KRW 588.6 billion (approx. \$429 million). This marks a 12.1% increase in sales and a 43.2% rise in operating profit. These results represent the highest figures in the company's history.

2025 Sales Target and Focus on Profitability

Kumho Tire targets 10% sales growth, aiming for \$3.8 billion in 2025. The company focuses on improving profitability.

Kumho Tire Quarterly Performance

and Growth

Kumho recorded sales of \$886 million and operating profit of \$108 million in Q4 2024. This marked a 17% year-on-year growth. The company maintained quarterly sales over \$630 million for five consecutive quarters starting in Q4 2023.

Economic Challenges

Despite the global economic downturn and sluggish automotive market in 2024, Kumho Tire achieved steady growth. The company had strong sales in the OE and RE tyre segments, especially in the U.S. and Europe.

IMPROVED KUMHO TIRE SALES THROUGH STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Kumho Tire improved profitability by prioritising highly value-added

products. The company diversified its sales networks and optimized supply chains to maintain stable revenue.

The company reported these earnings on the heels of announcing its relocation from downtown Atlanta to Summit Perimeter Campus in Sandy Springs, GA. The Kumho Tire U.S.A. relocation increases office space to 14,000 sq. ft., adding modern workspaces, conference rooms, and employee well-being areas. The new U.S. headquarters will officially open on March 31. 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.

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