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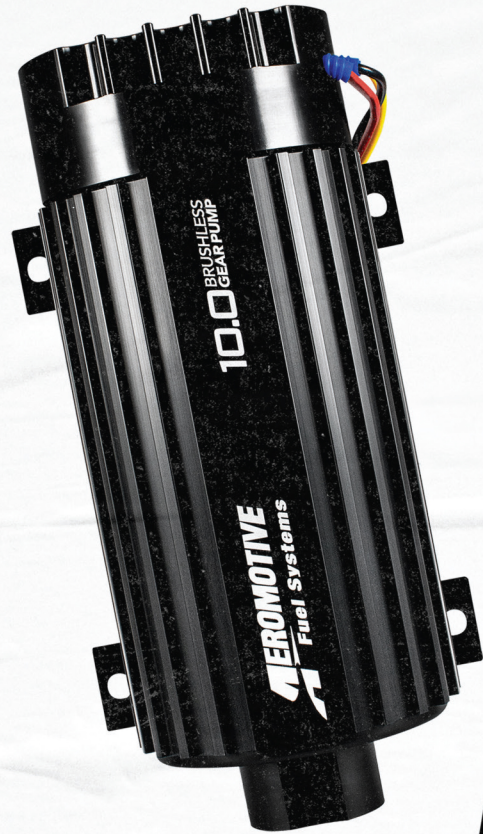
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ON THE COVER
With people having more free time, wanting to experience the outdoors but avoid crowds, and showing an interest in vehicles equipped for off-road driving, overlanding is an attractive option for consumers and a profitable pursuit for shops. See *Special Report* on page 38. (Photo courtesy White River Overland)

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Supply Chain Challenges Begin to Ease

Are the worst of our supply chain challenges behind us? A new report says it's likely, though prices may be a bit slower to recover.

The Specialty Equipment Market Association has released its *SEMA Future Trends – January 2022* report. In it, the SEMA Market Research Team offers a detailed analysis of the industry's most pressing issues and trends for 2022 and beyond.

Supply chain disruptions are at the top of the list—not a surprise, given that more than 80% of SEMA members reported that supply chain disturbances severely or moderately impacted their business in 2021.

The report notes that supply chain disruptions will continue to be an issue in 2022, “but the worst is likely behind us.”

SEMA Market Research projects that most issues should improve by the end of 2022. Prices are expected to remain somewhat elevated for a bit longer, however—likely into 2023.

Product shortages, shipping and transport delays and higher rates (shipping container rates are up 400% compared to October 2019), along with elevated input and commodity prices (steel is up 262% from October 2019), will be factors to watch in the automotive market, the report adds.

Despite the obstacles, 2021 was a strong year for the industry amid high demand, with many companies reporting record growth. SEMA predicts a continued upward trend for the specialty equipment market—likely at more muted levels in the short term before approaching pre-pandemic growth in 2023 and beyond.

According to the report, nearly three-quarters (74%) of industry companies expect sales growth in 2022. Key impacts for the industry will be consumer demand, supply chain disruptions, rising costs and automotive sales.

The report also summarizes the U.S. economic outlook. Despite ongoing uncertainty, 2021 was a strong year for the U.S. economy amid record demand and consumer spending.

Currently, the automotive industry has 2.91 million employees—just 4% below pre-pandemic employment levels in February 2020, marking one of the best recoveries of any sector in the country.

The U.S. economy will continue to grow in 2022, the report states, but again at lower levels than in 2021. By 2023, the economy should be back to pre-pandemic growth levels.

Finally, changing consumer demographics are reshaping our industry, as consumers interact with the automotive aftermarket industry differently depending on their stage of life. Some good news: despite popular misconceptions, many young people care about their vehicles and are looking to accessorize.

The report concludes that, “even as the population changes, consumers under 40 will continue to make up the majority of specialty equipment spending over the next decade. In fact, nearly 70% of specialty equipment sales in 2020 came from consumers under the age of 40.”

The complete *SEMA Future Trends – January 2022* report is available to download for free at sema.org/research. And if you enjoy this type of information, be sure to visit theshopmag.com and sign up for the free daily eNewsletter, which includes a monthly KPI (Key Performance Indicators) report sent directly to your inbox. **TS**

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Family businesses should draw up and sign buy-sell agreements long before a trigger event occurs.

By Phillip M. Perry

FAMILY BUSINESS SURVIVAL

How buy-sell agreements can resolve common crises.

A California-based family business was facing the worst crisis in its history. Not only was its founding patriarch and CEO starting to exhibit signs of mental deterioration, but his erratic behavior was threatening the bottom line. Business decisions were being neglected. Customers were being mistreated. Top employees were headed out the door.

With the future of their company at stake, the other family members at the third-generation enterprise realized they needed to find answers to three questions:

- How could they convince the CEO to relinquish control before he damaged the organization irretrievably?
- Who would shoulder his responsibilities?
- And where would they find the money to purchase his corporate shares?

BUY-SELL AGREEMENTS

Our opening scenario is not unusual. Family businesses everywhere can find their future imperiled when a critical shareholder can no longer exercise managerial duties.

Sometimes, the cause is physical or

mental disability. Other times it is an unexpected death, resignation, termination, retirement or divorce.

Luckily, the California business was able to resolve its crisis by resorting to a tool available to family businesses everywhere. A document called a *buy-sell agreement*, drawn up years earlier, mandated the terms by which the family business stock was bought and sold and the procedures for responding to unexpected events threatening the organization's survival.

In this case, the document required performance-based assessments of the CEO's mental competence.

"A good buy-sell agreement can shelter a family business from costly disruptions caused by material events involving its owners," says Sam Brownell, founder of Stratus Wealth Advisors in Kensington, Maryland (stratuswealthadvisors.com). "The right provisions can even keep company shares from falling into third party hands—an event that can damage the organization's profitability or even threaten its survival."

OUT OF THE BLUE

Family business crises are noted for their unpredictability. Here are just a few examples of some other *trigger events* that can put the bottom line at risk:

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Buy-sell agreements need to make sense for all the parties involved, or people will refuse to abide by them.



A good buy-sell agreement can shelter a family business from costly disruptions caused by material events involving its owners.

Divorce

A family member's divorce settlement grants the ex-spouse a batch of company shares—and a measure of unwelcome control over business decisions. The business faces a costly forced valuation and a search for cash to recapture stock.

“When a member of a family business sues for divorce, very often the spouse's attorney will try to attach company stock,” says John R. McAlister II, vice president of The Beringer Group, Radnor, Pennsylvania, a family business consultancy (theberingergroup.com). “It might also come to light that the spouse had been gifted some stock during the marriage.”

Personal bankruptcy

A family member with a large portion of the company stock runs up excessive credit card debt. When the creditors start to eye his shares as part of a bankruptcy settlement, the business risks losing substantial operational control to outside parties.

Minority shareholders

Over the years the business has granted so many corporate shares to children and grandchildren that passive shareholders now burden operations.

“Problems can arise when people inactive in the business must be consulted to one degree or another about key management decisions,” says Richard R. Spore, an attorney with Memphis-based Bass, Berry & Sims (bassberry.com). “Passive owners often resist shouldering the risks of change and can have conflicts of interest with those running the enterprise.”

Underperforming personnel

A second-generation family member who recently joined the company has underperformed to the extent that she must be terminated. The organization risks losing control of her stock.

VALUING THE STOCK

Any of these events, and others like them, can create hard feelings among family members. They can also disrupt business operations and even result in the loss of managerial control to third parties unless a carefully worded buy-sell agreement has set forth appropriate procedures.

Because most solutions to ownership crises require the recapture or transfer of company stock, any successful buy-sell

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Family business crises are noted for their unpredictability.

agreement must first specify how corporate shares will be valued. Setting a reasonable price can be difficult, though, when people on either side of the negotiating table push for assessment formulas that favor their interests. Those relinquishing stock will naturally seek the highest value possible.

The challenge can be especially great when individuals expect the value of their holdings to be equivalent to the value of publicly traded corporations.

“Any business’s selling price will typically be less if the transition is with family members rather than third-party buyers,”

says Brownell. “One reason is that external buyers who already have human resources, accounting, legal and other support departments will not need the redundant ones in a purchased enterprise. That makes the remaining parts of the business more valuable. In contrast, a next-generation buyer will need to retain those support departments. The fact that there is more expense involved in keeping them reduces the value of the purchased organization.”

The more expansive blend of interests characteristic of a family operation can also create confusion about value, says

Brownell. Negotiations will need to aim for a price that represents a win for outgoing and incoming family members, while also leaving sufficient reserves to sustain the business as an ongoing enterprise for employees and customers.

“The need to ensure that the business thrives and serves a mix of constituents means that the price will likely be a little bit lower than if the sale were to a third-party buyer,” says Brownell.

Some family businesses try to resolve such conflicts by inviting both sides to weigh in.

“Many buy-sell agreements have provisions that call for both seller and buyer to get appraisals,” says Travis W. Harms, the leader of Mercer Capital’s Family Business Advisory Services Group (mercercapital.com). “The idea is that if the two results differ within a specified percentage, then everyone agrees to accept an average of the two.”

Unfortunately, what seems on the surface like a good solution too often turns out to be yet another source of conflict. An appraiser will usually shade the business value assessment to reflect the interests of whoever is footing the bill.

“Once the parties are locked into a conflict, it is rare that the conclusions of the respective appraisers will be very close,” says Harms. “The upshot is that the business ends up hiring a third appraiser. Not only does this take time and money, but there is still plenty of room for argument. Inevitably, one or both parties will be unsatisfied and that can lead to hard feelings and litigation.”

It’s tempting to try to head off these conflicts by designing a valuation formula agreeable to everyone, then setting it in stone for use later. This also carries risks.

“While a clearly defined formula can avoid the problem of ambiguity, the problem is that industries, markets and business operations change over time,” says Harms. “A formula that makes sense today may not make sense five or 10 years down the road when the buy-sell agreement has to be used.”

REGULAR APPRAISALS

The secret to success, say consultants, is to schedule periodic appraisals with parameters that are clear and acceptable to all family members.

“All parties should understand the approaches to value being used and the assumptions being made,” says Harms. “That will reduce uncertainty and cut

■ QUIZ: HOW GOOD IS YOUR BUY-SELL AGREEMENT?

Will your buy-sell agreement protect your family business from disaster? Find out by taking this quiz. Score 10 points for each yes answer. Then total your score and check your rating at the bottom of the chart.

Does your buy-sell agreement do each of the following:

- Describe the disposition of corporate stock upon death, divorce, disability or personal bankruptcy?
- Establish procedures for the assessment of cognitive decline?
- Specify the recapture of stock from terminated family members?
- Designate conditions for the buy-back of passive shareholder stock?
- Enumerate funding sources for stock buy-backs?
- Establish trusts as needed?
- Ensure the conformance of personal wills with the buy-sell agreement’s terms?
- Schedule annual reviews of the buy-sell agreement?
- Require an annual business valuation?
- Ensure that all family members have bought into the agreement and its business valuation formula?

What’s your score? 80 or more: Congratulations. You have gone a long way toward preserving your family business. Between 60 and 80: It’s time to fine-tune your buy-sell agreement. Below 60: Your business is at risk. Take action on the suggestions in the accompanying article.

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Schedule periodic business appraisals with parameters that are clear and acceptable to all family members.

down on the potential for conflict later when a trigger event occurs.”

How often should the appraisals be done? For the best results, the consultants say appraisals should be done annually.

“It’s a lot less expensive to do that than to deal with the costly infighting that can otherwise result,” says Z. Christopher Mercer, CEO of Mercer Capital, Memphis (mercercapital.com).

Periodic appraisals offer an important fringe benefit: knowledge about a business’s confirmed value that can help guide management of the family’s wealth.

“Valuations can help family members understand the rate of return they’re receiving on their investment in their private company,” says Mercer. “And just like any other investment, that rate is based upon three points: a beginning value, an ending value and the interim distributions.”

Mercer offers an example: If a company stock valued at \$100 one year increases to \$112 a year later, then the shareholders have enjoyed a 12% return on their investment. If the company has also paid them a \$3 distribution, then their total return on investment has come to 15%.

FUNDING THE STOCK

Assessing the value of a family business is one thing. Scraping together sufficient cash to purchase a departing owner’s stock is another.

Buy-sell agreements should address funding sources to prevent a lot of scrambling when disaster strikes. Insurance policies can provide funds for the purchase of shares in the event of death or disability.

“Very often key person insurance can be taken out for individuals whose contributions to the business are so vital that if

something were to happen to them, the operational and earnings capacity of the business would be unduly impacted,” says Brownell. “The policy can be structured to pay sufficient cash to either hire a replacement, offset lost income or purchase the insured’s stake in the business.”

Neither life nor disability insurance will help, though, for trigger events such as retirement, resignation, termination or divorce. In such cases, businesses can find themselves searching for alternative funding sources.

Perhaps the first solution that comes to mind is an outside lender. But, in many cases, that’s less than ideal.

“A business that borrows money may end up reducing its future capital expenditures or cutting back on mergers and acquisitions,” says Harms. “Those alternatives can have adverse consequences for the company down the road.”

Purchase of shares by a third party also has its downsides.

“Many family businesses are wary of bringing in non-family shareholders,” says Harms. “Anyone who invests money will want to exert their influence to make the company run the way they would like to see it run. That can create a whole host of unintended and potentially negative outcomes.”

Yet another solution is seller financing, where the company gives the outgoing owner a promissory note for a specified amount to be paid off with interest over a certain number of years.

“Such an arrangement can help both parties,” notes Brownell. “The business benefits from a cash flow perspective and the seller avoids receiving one huge check subject to taxation in the year received.”

The downside is mostly borne by the seller, whose default risk may not be adequately compensated for by the interest received.

Finally, family businesses may decide to retain the outgoing owners as third-party consultants for a given number of years. This can free the business from the need to secure a large amount of cash while providing regular tax deductions for the scheduled payments.

The departing executives can continue to assist the business with their managerial input, enjoy a steady cash inflow and avoid a big tax bill for a large sum received in a single year.

START EARLY

Family businesses should draw up and sign buy-sell agreements long before a trigger event occurs.

“It’s much easier to hash out all of the *what-ifs* when everybody’s healthy and in good spirits, and the business is going well,” says Brownell. “You do not want to suddenly try to figure out who owns what part of the business, how people will be compensated and how the business will be valued the morning after a material event occurs.”

Such timeliness is especially important when it comes to business valuation, says Harms.

“It’s remarkable how reasonable people can be about valuation when they don’t know if they’ll be the buyer or the seller of stock at a certain price.”

Allocating company stock, valuing shares and wrestling with family personalities may seem like formidable tasks. But the result can be a carefully crafted buy-sell agreement that not only saves the business from the crippling costs of a financial crisis, but also keeps the family functioning as a unit when something bad happens.

And a cooperative family effort is critical to success.

“Buy-sell agreements need to make sense for all the parties involved, or people will refuse to abide by them,” says Spore. “And that means the business may end up with the very problem it wanted to avoid in the first place—litigation. That’s expensive, difficult and painful for everyone.” **TS**



New York City-based journalist **PHILLIP M. PERRY** publishes widely in the fields of business management and law.

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Breaking up with a client is never easy, but at times may be necessary.



IT'S NOT US, IT'S YOU

Deciding when it's time to break up with a client.

By Kate Zabriskie

Over a hundred of her clients only use her services once a year. They expect champagne service on a beer budget, and they pull her attention away from the people she works with regularly.

This group is weighing her down, and after some soul searching, she's decided they've got to go. Her business is running her, and it's not working.

Plain and simple, he doesn't like working with them. They pay late, they always look for extras and they're generally unpleasant.

Life's too short, he doesn't need the work and today's the day he's pulling the plug.

They pay their bills on time, they're as regular as clockwork, but they're no longer profitable. They've been great clients, and she dreads having to tell them they're no longer a fit for her business. Nevertheless, due to resource constraints, it's got to be done.



When the thought of leaving a client enters your mind, take a step back and ask yourself *why*.



If a client doesn't value you, or his or her business is no longer a fit for your core services, you may want to say goodbye.

From time to time, and for myriad reasons, service providers need to let a client or class of clients go. As with any other difficult conversation, there's a right way and a wrong way to break up with a client.

STEP 1 Be Methodical When Making the Decision

Snap judgments can feel good in real time. Later, however, many people come to regret actions they've taken in the heat of the moment.

So, when the thought of leaving a client enters your mind, take a step back and ask yourself *why*. Does the client not fit with your business model anymore? Does the person bring you down in some way? Does helping the client take away from more important work?

If you answer *yes* to any of those questions, it's time to think about what you will accept, what you won't, and what types of clients make sense for where you are now and where you want to be in the next few years.

Once you have clear criteria, you have something against which you can evaluate.

STEP 2 Ask Yourself if the Relationship is Truly Finished

After you're clear about what you want and the type of client that fits the bill, you must decide if the relationship is finished or if it has rehab potential.

For example, if a client is always late and that is what's making the relationship unpleasant, a frank conversation may solve the problem. On the other hand, if the client doesn't value you, or his or her business is no longer a fit for your core services, you may want to say goodbye.

Alternatively, if you can be had for a price, consider revising your fees. Some people may be perfectly happy to pay to stay.

STEP 3 Determine Whether You Will Make a Clean Break or Recommend an Alternative

When a client's behavior is perfectly fine but they are no longer a fit, sending them in another direction may make a lot of sense. When you do, however, you need to be clear that you are out of the picture and not a go-between for managing the new relationship. In other words, if something goes wrong, you're not involved.

At the other end of the spectrum, if the person or people you need to break up with are abusive, it hardly makes sense to recommend them to a colleague. After all, would you want people sending toxic clients your way? Probably not.

STEP 4 Choose the Right Time

When you make a split can be as important as how. For instance, if you're an accountant and just before tax time you make a break with

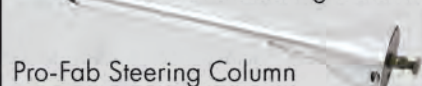


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SEMA OFFERS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING

A new Professional Development Program launched by the SEMA Future Leaders Network (FLN, formerly Young Executives Network, YEN) is helping shine light on best practices in the automotive aftermarket.

Sponsored by FLN in partnership with Dale Carnegie, the two-day, in-person program focuses on improving individual and business performance, according to the group. It is available exclusively to FLN members.

"The SEMA Future Leaders Network is committed to helping aspiring leaders advance in the industry," says Nick Caloroso, FLN chairman. "Partnering with a world-class organization such as Dale Carnegie is just one example of what we are doing to invest in the membership. I've been fortunate to have been able to participate in the Dale Carnegie Training, and I'm excited that other FLN members will have access to the program as well."

To make the training attainable for all employees including junior level executives and those from small businesses, FLN is subsidizing 50% of the cost and offering complimentary meals and hotel accommodations to a limited number of members.

The program will take place in March in Diamond Bar, California and will teach participants to:

- Communicate professionally and confidently in business situations
- Engage others by building rapport, asking pertinent questions and listening
- Build relationships and deal effectively with people in a multitude of scenarios
- Gain cooperation and influence people, including direct reports, laterally and upward
- Use emotional controls to sustain success

The program is limited to 25 FLN members, but any SEMA member company employee 40 years old or younger can apply for FLN membership at no cost. More information is available at <https://pages.message.sema.org/FLN-Profession-Development>.

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clients who only use you at tax time, you're going to make a lot of people angrier than they need to be.

When possible, provide ample warning.

STEP 5 **Keep Your Message Short and Direct**
When you break the news, keep your explanation brief:

"Karen, I have some updates about my business and where my focus is for the coming year. We've been shifting our attention to full-service clients for quite some time. Full-service clients are people who need us every month and not just once a year. You should know this is the last year I'm going to be handling clients who do not need our full services. Based on what I understand from working with you, I don't think full service is something you need. Am I correct?"

If the breakup is a result of a client's behavior, the message may be a little different.

"Roger, for our services to work, we need clients who respond when we ask for their feedback. We don't have the resources to manage the follow-up required when we don't hear anything. Because feedback isn't happening and it's been an ongoing issue, we're going to step away from the relationship."

STEP 6 **Stand Firm and Stay Calm**
Some people take a split well, and others don't. No matter the reaction, you should stay calm and stick by your carefully reasoned decision.

No matter the reason, splits are rarely fun when they're happening. Once they're over, however, they can free you to tackle new challenges and do the work that makes you happy. **TS**



KATE ZABRISKIE is the president of Business Training Works Inc., a Maryland-based talent development firm. She and her team help businesses establish customer service

strategies and train their people to live up to what's promised. For more information, visit businesstrainingworks.com.

MARCH 2022

Restyling

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THE BENEFITS OF AFTERMARKET LIGHTING ARE EASY TO SEE





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Aftermarket lighting upgrades provide real-world benefits for drivers. (Photo courtesy Heise LED Lighting Systems by Metra Electronics)



Shining Examples

Now's a great time to offer aftermarket lighting products.

By Jef White

If you're looking to make your customers' days brighter while placing your shop in the spotlight, consider offering aftermarket lighting products.

Available for all types of vehicles and all types of uses, today's lighting options are brighter, last longer and are more versatile than ever. Make them the star of your next project or add them to an accessory package to help drivers see clearer in any conditions.

To learn more, manufacturers offer their thoughts on common aftermarket lighting misconceptions, how new technology is affecting the market, and ways shops can increase sales.

GET ENLIGHTENED

From the start, manufacturers want installers to know that today's lighting

products are often more complex than systems of the past.

"A common misconception regarding aftermarket automotive lighting is that if the plugs match, the product will work," says Paul Elwell, west regional sales manager for Putco Inc. "There is increasing complexity to vehicles' electrical and computer systems, so there is absolutely no guarantee that connecting a lighting product means it will function properly."

Responsible suppliers will provide kits that work with each application.

"It is important for a manufacturer to understand these vehicle systems and fully vet their products for compatibility," Elwell says.

That means innovating, notes Randy Wimenta, marketing activation manager for KC Lights.

"Product technology is ever-changing

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RESTYLING/AFTERMARKET ACCESSORIES

Shining Examples

Today's lighting options are brighter, last longer and are more versatile than ever. (Photos courtesy Heise LED Lighting Systems by Metra Electronics)

RESTYLING/AFTERMARKET ACCESSORIES



and we continuously assess the different technologies in the marketplace," he says.

It's also important to remember that bigger numbers don't always mean better lighting, says Brandon Nelson, marketing manager for Vision X Lighting.

"Some buyers believe lumens or output is the most important factor when choosing an LED light," he says. "Consumers tend to overlook the more technical components that surround the LED itself that help distinguish between a premium brand and cheap knockoffs. From the housing design and circuitry down to the connectors and gaskets, all those pieces come into play when determining if an LED light is reliable, durable and will maintain maximum output in extreme conditions."

Jason Anderson, VP of product research and development – 12-volt division, and the sales team at Heise LED Lighting Systems by Metra Electronics suggest that shops investigate the suppliers they work with to ensure quality and responsiveness, noting that the most expensive products don't always offer the best performance.

Anderson also encourages shops to get behind aftermarket lighting, knowing it provides real-world benefits for customers.

"Just using Heise's driving lights with a focused beam pattern can help you see much better at night than using headlights alone," he says.

KEEPING PACE

Modern vehicles and aftermarket lighting systems seem to go hand in hand, says Nelson.

"New technology is making it easier than ever to modify or add accessories to your vehicle, especially in the off-road market," he observes. "With so many off-road-capable vehicles offering upfitter switches, and the vast number of aftermarket bumper

and rack products in the market, adding LED lighting has never been simpler. It is no longer a race to see who will offer aftermarket accessories for popular vehicles, but who can make the best solution for that application."

Those quality solutions mean plenty of long-lasting options for drivers and installers.

"The market is delivering better LED



Bigger numbers don't always mean better lighting. (Photos courtesy Vision X Lighting)

LIGHT THE WAY



Step up your lighting game with new LED lightbars and auxiliary lights from TrailFX. Available in various sizes, styles and beam patterns, with both side and bottom mounting options, these diecast aluminum lights are rated for 30,000 hours of service and carry a limited lifetime warranty. Unique Black Edition lights feature black chrome reflectors that create a sleek stealthy look until illuminated. When your adventure lasts beyond the sunset, rely on new LED lighting from TrailFX to light the way.

TRAILFX[®]

The logo graphic for TrailFX, featuring a stylized red and black tire tread pattern.

Find these new LED lights accessories and more at [TrailFX.com](https://www.TrailFX.com)



Shining Examples

Modern vehicles and aftermarket lighting systems seem to go hand in hand. (Photo courtesy Vision X Lighting)

chipsets that are brighter and more efficient than previous generations,” says Anderson. “This means smaller-sized lights are more powerful than ever, with less heat giving them a longer lifespan.”

Elwell says that quality manufacturers will stay on top of market changes to provide reliable systems now and in the future.

“New technology included in the vehicles by the OEMs is making it more difficult to manufacture lighting products that are fully compatible with the vehicle and its systems,” he explains. “This is effectively raising the bar for *who* can create trustworthy and functional products and creates a barrier to entry for cheap import products.”

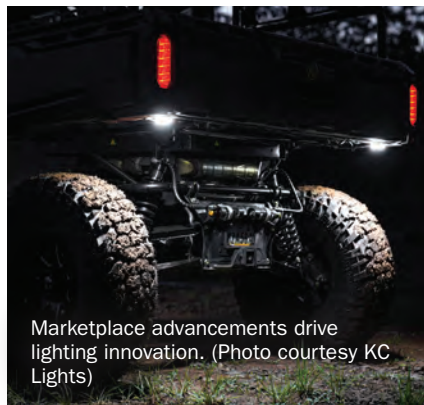
Top manufacturers will also seek input from customers, Wimenta adds.

“It is very important to listen to product users’ needs for certain vehicle applications,” he recommends. “This ultimately helps our R&D department provide the

best product solution that we think the market would be interested in.”

TOP SHOPS

Putco’s Elwell identifies the two components top shops must deliver to aftermarket lighting customers: source quality and compatibility.



Marketplace advancements drive lighting innovation. (Photo courtesy KC Lights)



Quality manufacturers will stay on top of market changes to provide reliable systems now and in the future. (Photo courtesy Putco Inc.)

Hot Lighting Products

■ **HOT PRODUCTS:** RGB & RGBW LED Wheel Lights & Underglow Kits

■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** The ability to use one Metra controller to work with the RGB or RGBW underglow and wheel light sets; built to withstand the elements; underglow kits are easy to install with two sealed water-resistant LED tubes; wireless control with a mobile app.

Heise LED Lighting Systems by Metra Electronics
Jason Anderson

VP of Product Research and Development – 12-Volt Division

■ **HOT PRODUCT:** Cyclone V2 LED Accessory Light

■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Hundreds of thousands sold to date; replace broken lenses or update colors on the fly; 15 LEDs for brightness; IP68 water and dust protection with a redesigned housing; efficient high-output-to-draw ratio; customizable mounting options.

KC Lights

Randy Wimenta

Marketing Activation Manager

■ **HOT PRODUCTS:** Putco Blade Direct Fit Kits

■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Specialized tailgate light bars with specialized plug-and-play harnesses to allow for direct compatibility for any 2004-newer truck; exclusive and proprietary rights to many of the connectors; OEM approvals; compatible with new Ford vehicles.

Putco Inc.

Paul Elwell

West Regional Sales Manager

■ **HOT PRODUCT:** Unite Light Bar

■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Modular light bar system; customizable pod options; multi-circuit functionality; quick-connect mounting rail with multiple mounting options; quad-optic design at over 2,000 lumens each with multiple lens colors, beam patterns and faceplate options.

Vision X Lighting

Brandon Nelson

Marketing Manager

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Shining Examples

Aftermarket lighting options are attractive to a wide range of customers. (Photo courtesy KC Lights)



Today's complex vehicle technology means aftermarket lighting systems need to be matched to their specific applications. (Photos courtesy Putco Inc.)

"The end consumer can source cheap parts through a large online marketplace if they are willing to take a risk on a generic product," he says. "If purchasing through a shop, however, the end consumer expects a high level of quality and functionality in their purchase and expert installation."

Working with reputable suppliers, he adds, will make the process seamless for the retailer,

noting "the shop should have the same expectations of its manufacturers and distributors."

One sales approach is to create accessory packages.

"Utilize aftermarket LED lighting as an add-on accessory to products you are currently offering," suggests Nelson of Vision X. "For instance, if you sell aftermarket bumpers or racks, or do custom installs,

use aftermarket LED lighting as an upsell for a more complete package."

Aftermarket lighting products really are attractive to a wide range of customers, says KC's Wimenta.

"Shops that currently offer radio or infotainment installs, for instance, can easily expand service offerings to include lighting installs," he suggests. "The lighting installation process typically uses a similar set of tools and requires a basic knowledge of automotive electrical systems."

All that's left is introducing them to your customers. Anderson and Heise's sales team list some possible approaches:

- *Have a vehicle that displays your lighting products.* "It is one thing to have an A-frame display to showcase your lights, but it is another to see an underglow kit on a Jeep or truck, lights inside actual wheels or cube lights flushed into bumpers or mounted on a vehicle's pillars."
- *Post photos and videos on social media.* "Customers want to see the final results of how it looks installed at night on a vehicle, not just the product photos."
- *Outfit all employee vehicles one way or another.* "Show customers the differences and your loyalty to the products."
- *Pick a light or two and leave them running in the front window.* "Draw attention to the shop at night."

Finally, Anderson believes education on lighting products "should trickle down from the manufacturer's rep to the shop owner to the sales staff. If your shop is new to lighting, start with small accent lighting, interior lighting and lighted switches for aftermarket accessories." **TS**

Bumper LEDs Part of VelociRaptor 600 Upgrades



Among the available upgrades for the Hennessey VelociRaptor 600 are front and rear bumpers with integrated LED lights.

Hennessey, the Texas-based hypercar manufacturer and high-performance vehicle creator, has started production of its new VelociRaptor 600. The Ford F-150 Raptor-based truck surpasses 500 hp and 670 pound-feet of torque.

Among the available upgrades are front and rear bumpers with integrated LED lights—a unique touch to go along with the pickup's more performance-oriented options.

"The VelociRaptor has been our most popular vehicle for years, so with production of the third-gen truck now under way, we're anticipating building hundreds of models throughout 2022," says John Hennessey, company founder and CEO. "The stock Raptor is a fabulously capable and very quick machine, so our customers love that we can enhance its power and performance to new levels."

Additional off-road upgrades include 20-inch wheels and up to 37-inch off-road tires, and a suspension leveling kit. Customers can also opt for a six-piston front brake set to increase stopping power.

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- NO DRILLING REQUIRED -BOLTS THROUGH FACTORY HOLE LOCATIONS
- STRONG ANCHOR POINTS ALLOW ROCK SLIDERS TO BE LIFTED WITH A HI-LIFT JACK AT ANY POINT
- PROTECTS ROCKER PANELS AND/OR AGAINST DOOR DINGS
- FITS 5FT BED

With growth being the norm in the automotive aftermarket, it's important for shops to focus their time and efforts on the profitable parts of their business.

Your Attention Please

Areas to focus on for growth & profits.

By Josh Poulson

SEMA reports show the automotive accessory business was a \$48 billion market in 2020, and could rise to \$57 billion by 2024. We'd all love to have a larger portion of the pie. However, we also face the same issues that other specialty aftermarket businesses deal with when it comes to growth.

There is only so much room in your shop, and every square foot needs to be making money. Also, there are so many products and so many manufacturers pushing for your business that it can get overwhelming. Lastly, there is only so much time in the day.

So, how do you decide where to focus your efforts?

Here are a few things to look at when determining which products (old or new) to spend time and resources on to grow your business and make a profit.

I have put them in my personal order of preference, but their importance may vary from shop to shop:

- Quality
- Price
- Ease of Installation
- Ease of Doing Business
- Innovation

QUALITY

To me, quality is the most important item on this list. That's not to say that the others aren't important, but quality is the first thing I look at.

If you sell lower-quality products, they will come back to haunt you and you'll end up paying more in the long run. You will deal with more warranty issues, more unhappy customers and ultimately a damaged reputation that cannot be fixed with money.

Of course, every manufacturer claims to have the best quality, so how can you figure out who really does? One thing we do is ask for a sample or demo piece.

Most reputable manufacturers will be willing to give you a sample to try out. You can then do your own testing—maybe install it on a company vehicle—and see how it performs.

If you already trust the manufacturer because its previous products have performed well, then you should be comfortable buying some inventory. Still, be sure to keep track of any warranty issues or other problems that come up with these new products.



Selling high-quality products saves money in the long run and helps build a shop's reputation.





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The best price doesn't always mean the lowest price, but instead the price that offers the best value for manufacturer and installer alike.

PRICE

Yes, of course, we all want the best price. But that doesn't always mean the *lowest* price. It means the best *value*.

We know what a product should roughly cost, even in today's rollercoaster market where supply and transportation expenses are affecting everything. After we learn the cost, we immediately think of what we can sell it for—not what we *should* sell it for, but what we will be able to sell it for.

This is always a point of contention between shops and manufacturers. For example, the manufacturer says you should be able to sell a product for \$500 installed to a car dealership. But is it taking into account the cost of the product, the time it takes to do the install, the time and money it takes to process the order and create the invoice, the logistics involved, and the accounting time needed to collect the money?

If the manufacturer only considers one or two of these expenses, then it hasn't thought things all the way through.

Has it checked to see if the OEMs offer a similar product? If so, what is the price difference? Is it enough to sway customers to choose the aftermarket alternative?

Regardless, it is always easier to lower your price if the market deems it too high than to raise prices later.

At the end of the day, price is important—but margins are more important. If your shop offers 50 to 100 products, you'll want to focus the majority of your time

on the most profitable items. So, manufacturers aren't really fighting competitors who offer similar products; they are instead fighting for your shelf space and to be top of mind during the sales process.

To make it to the top of this list, the product must offer the shop strong margins or the sales force and management team will shy away, no matter how great it actually performs.

EASE OF INSTALLATION

Now, this might be the old technician in

me coming out, but it goes without saying that if a product is hard to install then it gets a *black eye* quickly.

Installers don't want to install it, so they complain to management. Managers don't like to hear complaining, so they tell sales. Salespeople don't want issues, so they stop selling it.

It's a dangerous funnel for a product to get into because it rarely ever gets back out. So, what is an *easy* installation?

First, the time it takes for the install needs to be compatible with the profit margin. If installation takes more than two hours, there needs to be good profit built in. Otherwise, the tech and the shop would rather do a bunch of quicker, better-margin jobs.

Also, does the installation make sense? Can an experienced tech look at the product and understand about 90% of it? If not, does the product come with very well-written installation instructions with pictures? What about a tech website, QR code or a phone number for difficult questions?

EASE OF DOING BUSINESS

This is actually an important one that many of us forget about until it becomes a glaring issue. It includes things like the ordering process, the shipping process, and the returns and warranty processes.

One thing we look at is how up-to-date a supplier's website is, and if it has an application chart that is kept current.



Ease of installation plays a role in how eager shops will be to push certain products.

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Manufacturers that are easy to work with can become a shop's best friend.

Also, can we place orders online or via email? Phone ordering is archaic and younger employees particularly don't want to wait on hold or talk to someone unless they have to. Email or online systems take away any uncertainty regarding what was ordered and provide easy documentation if there are mistakes.

So, if you are a manufacturer, please don't think that you can just talk to people about what they need or should buy. Put your knowledge and suggestions on a document and share it with your customers!

Meanwhile, shipping—or, more importantly, how long it takes to get the goods—is also crucial. The good news is that we have all learned to be a little more patient during this pandemic.

In the dealership world, instances of waiting a week for a product and then going back to do the job used to be nonexistent. However, these days we have to place orders and then get with customers once the parts arrive. We are seeing many more buyers ordering new vehicles and then waiting weeks or even months for delivery instead of driving off the lot the same day, which has helped curb the demand for quick accessory installations.

That being said, if we can provide a quick turnaround and not have to wait for days to obtain products that we don't always keep in inventory, consumers will enjoy a better overall experience and we can capitalize on every sale without the risk of losing any.

Finally, returns and warranties can put manufacturers on a different level. A good

manufacturer will have a good return policy and a clear warranty process. Many times, this takes the form of a *warranty exchange*, so that the customer doesn't have to be without a product while its warranty status is determined.

Being able to obtain return authorization numbers quickly and painlessly is another way for us to rate how easy it is to do business with a particular company.

INNOVATION

Products get better as time goes by, and that should be apparent with any accessory.

Looking to see what makes a product better than other similar items, or what

new niche it can fill for customers, is always a good idea. Having a product that not many others offer or being able to point to a feature of the product that stands out on its own are great selling tools, and many times become deciding factors for consumers.

The innovation in the aftermarket is and always has been outstanding. Included in this is how manufacturers can be innovative in helping restylers understand, install and sell their products.

The more a manufacturer is at the top of its field, the more attractive it becomes. Continuing innovation ensures that our industry will remain healthy, relevant and profitable for years to come.

So, as you can see, many factors (including others that haven't been listed) come into play when a shop is choosing a product or manufacturer partner. As our industry continues to grow, focusing on what's important will help your shop grow along with it. **TS**



JOSH POULSON is the principal of Auto Additions in Columbus, Ohio, which was named Restyler of the Year, 2012-'13. Auto Additions offers a complete line of product upgrades

including 12V and appearance packages with a specific focus on the dealership segment. Josh is chairman of the SEMA PRO council and was named 2015-'16 Person of the Year at the 2015 SEMA Show.



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Gladiator Cargo Rack

Adventure Rack Systems, Rancho Cordova, California, presents its OverCab Pro Rack system for Jeep Gladiator models. Designed to increase functionality, the made-in-the-USA rack has a 600-pound weight capacity and is made from strong 2-inch tubing. Available with the optional KatWalk add-on, the rack keeps the bed free for other gear and includes signature weld-on front grab handles.



Surface-Mount Speaker Modules

Retro Manufacturing, Henderson, Nevada, presents RetroPod 6A Surface-Mount Speaker Modules with a new, slim, angled design. Featuring a mounting depth of 2.44 inches, the RPOD6A modules accept 6.5-inch speakers and can be mounted in a variety of locations to add speakers to classic vehicles that didn't originally come with an audio system without cutting or modifying the interior. RetroPods are built with rugged ABS plastic that can be painted, wrapped in vinyl or carpeted for a fully customized look.



Wrangler JL Spare Tire Relocation Kit

Quadratec, West Chester, Pennsylvania, presents its new Spare Tire Relocation Kit for 2018-'21 Jeep Wrangler JL and JLU applications. A simple solution to mount an oversized spare tire, the kit fits tires up to 37 inches with the factory bumper while retaining use of the OE back-up camera. The factory spare tire carrier bolts directly to the kit's bracket to move the spare tire mount up 1.75 inches and out 0.94 inch. The bracket is manufactured from heavy-duty, 8mm-thick steel alloy with a durable powder-coat finish, and installs with hand tools.

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F-150 Speedometer Calibrator

Hypertech, Bartlett, Tennessee, presents its new In-Line Speedometer Calibrator Module for 2021-up Ford F-150 trucks, gasoline and diesel engine applications. The device corrects the speedometer and odometer for pickups with non-stock tire sizes and gear ratios. To use, simply connect the module to a computer using the provided USB cable and enter the new tire height and/or gear ratio, then disconnect the original connector to the instrument cluster and install the in-line module. Finally, plug the original cluster wiring into the module.



Winch-Mount Front Bumpers

ICON Vehicle Dynamics, Riverside, California, introduces its new PRO Series JL/JT Front Bumpers with Recessed Winch Mount, the latest in its expanded IMPACT product line of armor and accessories. Available for Jeep JL and JT models, the bumpers include an integrated, recessed winch mount that places the winch low, achieving a lower center of gravity and allowing increased airflow through the radiator. The bumpers are available with either a low-profile Impact Bar or a rock crawler-style Stinger Bar.



Rogue/Pathfinder Air Suspension Kits

Air Lift Co., Lansing, Michigan, presents its Air Lift 1000 air suspension kits, now available for 2014-'21 Nissan Rogue and 2013-'22 Nissan Pathfinder applications. By working with the vehicle's existing suspension, Air Lift 1000 helps alleviate vehicle squat, poor headlight aim, unresponsive steering, trailer sway, body roll and bottoming-out. The system is air-adjustable from 5 to 35 psi, and the volume of the air springs will improve overall ride quality whether the vehicle is loaded or unloaded.



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Wrangler Mesh Trail Screens

MasterTop, Golden, Colorado, presents its new Mesh Trail Screens for 2007-'21 Jeep Wrangler JL and JK models with factory soft-tops. Designed to provide an open-air feeling that lets in fresh air while blocking the sun's harmful rays, the custom-designed, three-piece quarter and rear mesh vehicle enclosure system is constructed of extra-durable mesh fabric that is small enough to keep bugs out while allowing fresh air to flow through the vehicle. The system can be combined with factory windows, providing an alternative to running a complete window set.



Truck & SUV Tires

Mickey Thompson Tires & Wheels, Stow, Ohio, presents its Baja Boss A/T line of light-duty truck and SUV tires, now available in 15 popular new sizes. The tires feature an all-new S1 silica-reinforced compound that provides lasting tread life, cut and chip resistance, and improved wet handling and braking performance. They are severe snow service rated with a 3PMS certification. The Baja Boss A/T's asymmetrical tread design is optimized for less noise. Deep, aggressive Sidebiters give it a bold look, along with off-road traction and protection.

RESTYLING/AFTERMARKET ACCESSORIES



Bronco Air Suspension

AccuAir Suspension, Merritt Island, Florida, introduces an Air Suspension Kit for Ford Bronco applications. The system integrates with factory **Bilstein** shocks and maintains G.O.A.T. modes and other factory functions. It supports factory travel with adjustable ride height and improves overall ride quality. Height-based leveling includes three preset levels along with full manual control, and also adjusts to compensate for changes in load to maintain clearance.



Shine Protectant

Meguiar's, Irvine, California, presents Ultimate Insane Shine Protectant. Available in both a spray and wipes, the formula provides a lasting, premium high-gloss shine on many modern surfaces including dashboards, door panels, consoles, tires, wheel wells and exterior trim. The premium protectant spreads quickly and easily without streaking.

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Bronco Light System

RIGID Industries, Gilbert, Arizona, presents an A-Pillar Light Kit with 360-Series spot and 360-Series drive lights for 2021-up Ford Bronco applications. Allowing a clean installation of high-output LED lighting, the kit includes two A-pillar mounting brackets, a pair of 4-inch 360-Series drive lights with amber backlighting, a pair of 4-inch 360-Series spot lights with amber backlighting, two solid black light covers, two transparent amber light covers and a wiring harness.



Jeep JK LED Lighting

Oracle Lighting, Metairie, Louisiana, presents its Sidetrack LED Lighting System for 2007-2018 Jeep Wrangler JK applications. The tactical-inspired body cladding is equipped with multi-function integrated LED lights. The light modules consist of a pair of injection-molded inserts that fit in the original bodylines for a seamless look, with an option to create a functional fender vent. Installation requires no modification to the fender sheet metal.

LED Lighting

Metra Electronics, Holly Hill, Florida, presents its next generation of Blackout Series Lightbars, Driving Lights and Cube Lights from



Heise LED Lighting

Systems by Metra Electronics. Featuring refined frames and cleaner lines, the lights include upgraded optics that have changed from a direct placement to an indirect placement, allowing more control of the location and pattern of the beam. Heise is also shipping its new heavy-duty Edgeless Series of work and driving lights.



Tundra Gear Packages

Nitro Gear & Axle, Cashmere, Washington, presents Front and Rear Gear Packages for 2007-newer Toyota Tundra 5.7L applications. Offered in 4.88 or 5.29 gear ratios, the packages fit Toyota 9-inch clamshell front and 10.5-inch rear differentials and help retain fuel economy and save the transmission.



Off-Road Wheel Spacers

Mishimoto, New Castle, Delaware, introduces Borne Off-Road Wheel Spacers. Available for a variety of common thread patterns, center bores and thicknesses, the spacers are forged from 6061-T6 aluminum and feature grade-12.9 steel studs and lug nuts, ensuring a safe and secure installation. The hub-centric design provides a direct extension of the axle hub for precise wheel fitment and reduced load on the hardware for safe, smooth driving. The spacers come in a black or blue anodized finish, and kits contain two wheel spacers with pre-installed studs and hardware. **TS**

Off-Road LED Lightbars

Lumileds, Farmington Hills, Michigan, introduces a new line of Off-Road LED Lightbars. The **Philips Ultinon Drive 5000** series is engineered for superior beam performance, durability and a long, trouble-free service life. The series includes three single-row and two double-row lightbars, in 10-, 20- and 30-inch widths. The lightbars produce illumination patterns from 400 to 500 yards depending on the model, and Ultinon Drive optics combine spot and flood light beam patterns to improve visibility both far and wide.





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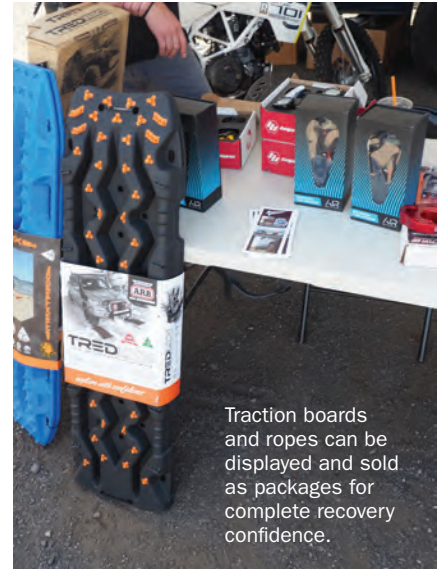


BACK ON TRACK

Recovery gear leads the way to overlanding opportunities.

By Mark C. Bach

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Overland Expo Adds Pacific NW Event:
<http://shopmag.link/overland-expo-pac>



Traction boards and ropes can be displayed and sold as packages for complete recovery confidence.

The overland experience has been around for years, but has recently exploded in popularity and recognition.

With people having more free time, wanting to experience the outdoors but avoid crowds, and showing interest in vehicles equipped for off-road driving, overlanding is an attractive option for consumers and a profitable pursuit for shops. A section of the 2021 SEMA Show was devoted to the overlanding movement and the many add-ons designed for outdoor adventures.

One of the product niches that's been on the upswing of late is recovery gear. A must-have for experienced overlanders, these accessories help drivers get unstuck or up, over and around tight spaces.

The products are often universal in nature, making them easier to stock. They take up little room, are simple to display and serve as interesting entry points and add-on sales candidates for just about any off-road project.

When automotive shops add a lifted suspension or swap out tires for something with a more aggressive tread pattern, it's an easy next step to present recovery gear options for those heading off the beaten path. After all, cell phone service and tow trucks may be hard to find in the hinterlands.

Consumers might not initially think they need a quality set of recovery gear, but we've heard from drivers who have returned with stories of how these handy



A must-have for experienced overlanders, recovery gear helps drivers get unstuck or up, over and around tight spaces.

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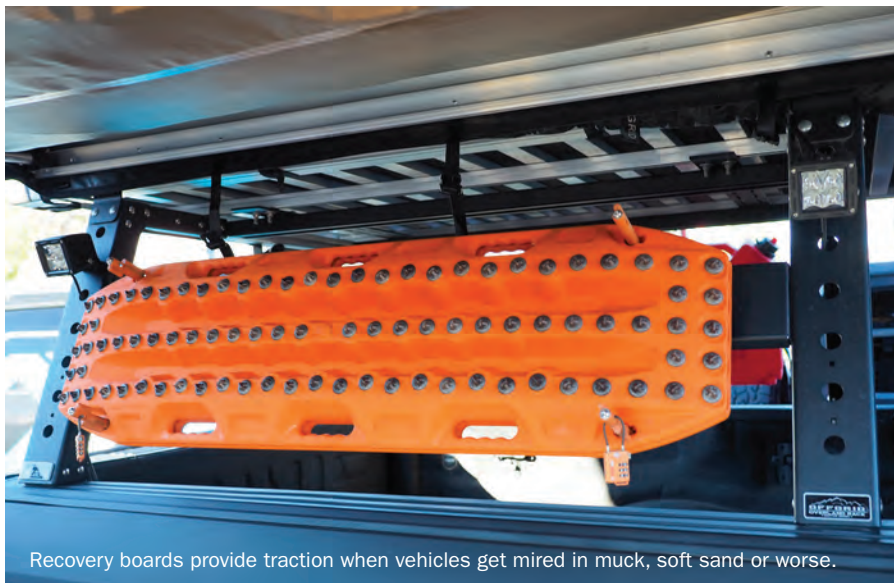
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Recovery boards provide traction when vehicles get mired in muck, soft sand or worse.



They are usually made with lightweight nylon and fitted with teeth that provide enhanced traction.



Many boards are designed with shovel-like ends to help clear debris from underneath and around the tires.



Boards can be quickly mounted inside or outside the vehicle for easy access.

accessories turned out to be lifesavers in unexpected situations.

RECOVERY GEAR ESSENTIALS

Recovery gear can be broken down into two simple products: ropes/straps and traction boards. Essential items when venturing off the pavement, they take up little room in a truck or SUV and offer a safety net for off-road drivers who run into problems or come across a stranger that needs help.

Recovery boards

Recovery boards provide traction when vehicles get mired in muck, soft sand or worse. They are usually made with lightweight nylon and fitted with teeth that provide enhanced traction.

Many boards are designed with shovel-like ends to help clear debris from under-

neath and around the tires. They can be quickly mounted inside or outside the vehicle for easy access when needed.

From a shop's perspective, these boards are pretty much one-size-fits-all. Many brands are available, and most offer just a few options in regard to designs and styles.

Another neat feature: the current trend is for these to be brightly colored. This makes them not only easier to use in low-light situations, but also helps them stand out on a shop's display wall. It's easy to start a conversation when a customer spots a glowing pink, orange or green board and wants to learn more.

Scott Frary, Northwest sales manager for ARB 4X4 Accessories, notes that his firm offers just three styles of recovery boards, including the top-of-the-line TRED Pro. A user point he stresses is that the boards

are not meant to act as a bridge over terrain elements.

Recovery ropes/straps

The outdoor industry has expanded recovery offerings beyond basic ropes and chains. Kinetic recovery designs offer the latest technology and safety for consumers.

Some companies offer rope versions while others offer recovery *straps* that proponents say are easier to store and transport. Frary notes that in most off-road vehicles, "storage is at a premium and straps allow for users to have space for things they enjoy."

(For this article, we'll use *rope* as an all-inclusive term for the various rope and strap designs available in the marketplace today.)

A recovery rope stretches before reaching its maximum reach. That stretch allows for

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PHOTO OF MICAH WEBER @OVERLANDUNDERBUDGET | SHOT BY JOHN KINGSTON @WHYWEROAM

Jhan Dolphin and *Outside* magazine teamed up to build a capable-yet-achievable Ford Ranger overlander called *Live Bravely*.



'LIVE BRAVELY' IN THE OUTDOORS

Jhan Dolphin, a custom vehicle designer and contributing writer for *THE SHOP* and *theshopmag.com*, is known for his wild vehicles, often paired with somewhat unusual partnerships through J Robert Marketing. His latest collaboration, however, makes perfect sense.

The project began as a new 2021 Ford Ranger pickup and a shared vision with *Outside* magazine to build a capable-yet-achievable overlander called *Live Bravely*.

"Our entire build team lives an active lifestyle and loves the outdoors," explains Dolphin. "So, we're honored to be working with the team at *Outside* on this project."

Upfitting was completed by what Dolphin describes as the *Midwest dream team* of Attitude Performance in Arlington Heights, Illinois and CPV Paint & Graphics in Franksville, Wisconsin. Both have worked with Dolphin on a variety of award-winning vehicle concepts over the years.

Having debuted in the Ford Motor Co. booth at the 2021 SEMA Show, the Ranger showcases a long list of aftermarket accessories and modifications, starting with a BDS suspension, FOX

shocks, ARB bumpers and aggressive BFGoodrich tires for expanded off-road capabilities.

The comfortable interior includes custom leather seating from Katzkin and the Gaia GPS app from *Outside* for backcountry hiking, biking and off-road camping. The bed of the truck is all business, with a TruckVault secure storage system, ARB fridge, Thule Tepui rooftop tent, WaterGen atmospheric water collection system and smokeless

BioLite FirePit+.

An additional power supply comes courtesy of a Goal Zero power pack, while a series of powerful Rigid Industries accessory lights are ready to illuminate the trail.

Additional contributors include: Air Design (fender flares); BOLT Locks, Borla (performance exhaust); WARN Industries (recovery winch); Weld (20-inch off-road wheels) and Yakima (bed rack system).



SPECIAL REPORT: OVERLANDING

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Recovery ropes and straps stretch before reaching their maximum reach. That stretch allows for a smoother pull-out for vehicles—no more bumpers being torn off with a traditional rope or chain.



For most outdoor uses, a rope's breaking strength should be at least two- to four-times the weight of the vehicle being recovered.

a smoother pull-out for vehicles—no more bumpers being torn off with a traditional rope. Plus, if the kinetic rope is being used as an emergency tow rope, both drivers will appreciate its ability to gently stretch as the vehicles motor down the road to a service center or convenient spot for a tow truck

to come to the rescue.

The kinetic ropes are braided nylon with built-in *eyes* at each end for easy attachment. Most are generally available in 20- or 30-foot segments.

Kinetic recovery ropes come in a variety of diameters based on their breaking

strength. Typically, the ropes will be less than 1-1/2 inches in diameter and can exceed 50,000 pounds of breaking strength.

For most outdoor uses, a rope's breaking strength should be at least two- to four-times the weight of the vehicle being pulled out. This provides for a safe pull in most recovery situations. So, a Jeep that weighs around 5,000 pounds might want a rope with a breaking strength of 20,000 pounds.

Amanda Caldwell, account manager for Bubba Recovery Gear in Florida, notes that the most popular Bubba Power Stretch ropes come in four sizes/breaking strengths and two standard lengths. So, with eight SKUs, a shop would be able to meet most user demands.

Caldwell says the company's 20-foot rope with a 7/8-inch diameter is its most popular seller, offering a breaking strength of 28,600 pounds. However, sales of all rope models have "skyrocketed" over the past year, she reports.

Recovery ropes should be stored in a UV-resistant bag, which many companies provide as part of a recovery rope kit. As long as the customer avoids abrasion points with the rope and keeps it clean and free of debris, the recovery rope should last indefinitely.

The major cause of rope degradation is when the breaking limits are exceeded. If a user is always pulling out a 10,000-pound truck with a 15,000-pound rope, it will start to break fibers and eventually fail.

Most shops can display one or two recovery ropes to engage a customer. Then an employee can guide them in selecting

SPECIAL REPORT: OVERLANDING



Kinetic recovery ropes and straps offer the latest technology and safety for consumers.

the correct length and breaking strength for their ride.

To spur interest, many companies will offer a smaller sample rope that is only a few feet long for demonstration purposes. Display one prominently in your shop and customers will start asking why the rope

they bought at the local big-box lumber store might not be the right tool when vehicles get stuck.

Recovery gear is a great first step for shops interested in the overlanding market. The items are easy to sell, take up little room and require only a few SKUs.



They can also be displayed and sold as packages for complete recovery confidence. It's a great feeling to offer optional items that will make a customer's outdoor experience safer and more enjoyable. **TS**

MARK C. BACH is a well-preserved automotive junkie with 30W oil in his veins who remembers feeler gauges and brake springs. He has a love for all things that move, especially old-school muscle cars. Bach covers car auctions and the automotive scene and writes for a variety of outlets, including Chevy Classics, Round-Up Publications and eBay Motors, and maintains Route66pubco.com.

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‘A Little Better Every Day’

White River Overland is enjoying the adventure. By Maura Keller

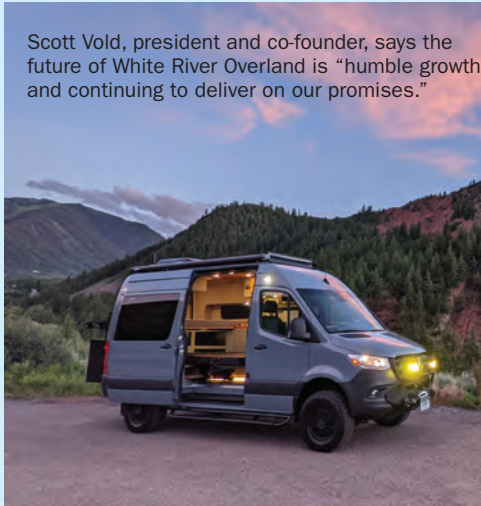
 MORE ON THESHOPMAG.COM: Hear Scott Vold on the In Gear with THE SHOP podcast: <http://shopmag.link/whiteriverpod>

Scott Vold, president and co-founder of White River Overland in Aspen, Colorado has been involved in the automotive aftermarket for more than 25 years. His experience helps bring camper van upfitting services and popular interior and exterior accessories to a ready audience living an active outdoor lifestyle in the Rocky Mountains and beyond.

The company started in 1996 as a small windshield repair service. By the fall of 1997, Vold was providing full-service auto glass repair and replacement in what is now White River’s current location.

“In the winter of 2001, I was having lunch with a friend at an iconic Aspen eatery when he told me a story about trying to find some spare parts for his bike rack,” Vold recalls. “He suggested I start selling car racks and accessories as a supplement to our existing windshield business. He joked, saying I could call it *Cracks & Racks!*”

Vold explored the idea and decided to become a niche retailer of car racks through



Scott Vold, president and co-founder, says the future of White River Overland is “humble growth and continuing to deliver on our promises.”



his professional auto glass shop, and Cracks & Racks was born.

“About this time our eCommerce business was up against too much competition. And nobody packs a box better than Amazon. So, we pivoted our business model and made it more of a service model providing products

that generally required professional installation,” Vold says. “That adaptation led to the fall of 2017, when we purchased our first Sprinter van and began working on it and learning everything we could.”

The experience resulted in a new business offering off-road upfitting. Today, White

White River Overland in Aspen, Colorado offers camper van upfitting services and popular interior and exterior accessories to a ready audience in the Rocky Mountains and beyond.



SPECIAL REPORT: OVERLANDING



River Overland has seven full-time employees and the overall shop footprint is approximately 3,300 square feet—about 2,000 of which is dedicated to overlanding projects.

EMBRACING CHALLENGES

Three years after Vold finished that first Sprinter van project, the world was essentially shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. He says addressing how the pandemic has affected his business is difficult, because he simply can't ignore the tremendous impact it has had on the entire country.

"As a company, we've managed to create a steady stream of business going into the new year. We were quite fortunate to be able to remain open during the initial shutdowns in 2020, but there was so much uncertainty at the time that we were almost reinventing the way we interacted with people every day," Vold says. "At our workplace it brought about a lot of change pretty quickly, and some folks dealt with that better than others."

Challenges aside, the business interruption gave Vold and his team an opportunity to update systems by bringing in two new software platforms to run the auto glass business separately from White River Overland.

Recently, ongoing supply chain issues have added yet another layer to the evolving challenges the company's been facing of late.

"It seems like for the last year we have spent most of our days just trying to explain to people where their products are," Vold says. "That has to be the most frustrating thing—trying to figure out how to manage people's expectations when you can't even manage your own. Somehow, though, we've made it work and we are empathetic with all of the aspects of the supply chain."

If nothing else, Vold says supply disruptions have created greater demand for American-made goods, noting that many of the products he carries that are not custom-fabricated are now made by small manufacturers in the USA.

PROJECTS APLENTY

Vold and his team have had ample opportunity to work on an array of projects over the years. White River Overland is not a large-volume builder, so detail and quality are its foremost principles.

The company's clients come from various demographics—the shop works with everyone from retirees to young families, all with an underlying love of the outdoors.



The *Endurance* van marked a milestone for White River Overland and paved the way for subsequent builds.




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“I am proud of every project we’ve done,” Vold says. “*Genesis*, which was the first van we built, is confirmation bias to me that we were building a good product. In 2018, the White River Overland custom van was a milestone project for us that started our relationship with Adventure Wagon in Portland, Oregon. The *Endurance* van marked another milestone and really paved the way for several subsequent builds, including the *Wolf Den*, which is one of our most recently completed projects that will be coming online shortly.”

Working on such specialized projects requires an employee base with solid skill sets. Vold even found one of his key employees on Facebook, of all places.

“He made a post looking for work where he wouldn’t be treated (badly) and I sent him a message,” Vold says. “I did not know what to expect when he came in for an interview, but he blew me away and I hired him on the spot. That was almost two years ago.”

Having exceptional employees is vital to the success of any business and White River Overland is no exception. That’s why

Vold believes the only way to keep good employees is to compensate them fairly and treat them with respect.

“Today, with the *Great Resignation* upon us, we didn’t make a big push to hire. Real estate prices went through the roof locally and relocating someone without housing is cost prohibitive for a company our size,” Vold explains. “So, we’re just going to let the dust settle here for a little bit and reassess in the spring.”

White River Overland has not done much advertising outside of some links on partner websites, and Vold admits the company’s social media presence could be improved.

“It’s never been very consistent and it falls on my shoulders and it hasn’t been a priority, even though I fully understand the impact it has and can have,” Vold says. “The truth is, we’ve never had someone that can really give it the attention it deserves to the standard that we expect. We have been fortunate to have had strong word-of-mouth referrals.”

The company does feature a selection of curated products for sale on its website (whiteriveroverland.com).

“There are some products like our bike racks and ski racks that we like to keep in stock. Lately, those have been challenging to get, however, so we’ve been ordering what we can, when we can,” Vold says.

Primarily though, for van building, the company orders items as needed.

“A few of our more frequent service elements we keep in stock and we bring in other products as demand dictates,” Vold says. “We maintain a 700-square-foot showroom that has a strong representation of the types of products that we have.”

ADVENTURE AHEAD

Like its clients heading out on an adventure, Vold is uncertain of what’s around the next bend.

“We want the company to continue to grow, but responsibly,” he says. “Ultimately, White River Overland is ready to stand on its own two feet and that’s an exciting opportunity as we continue to launch the brand.”



Wolf Den is one of the shop’s recently completed builds.



Vancy by White River Overland.



parts from local dealers and have developed many relationships with local businesses that remain intact today," Vold says.

While it's taken a long time to work *on* the business more than he works *in* the business, Vold still very much enjoys what he does.

"Any entrepreneur will tell you that you wear a lot of hats in your company. I think I'm most fortunate now that my job has evolved some and my focus is less on day-to-day operations and more on project management," Vold says. "The

future of White River Overland is humble growth and continuing to deliver on our promises. With the right opportunity, we would like to one day scale our operation. Until then, like I tell my team, 'Let's just get a little better every day.'" **TS**

MAURA KELLER is a freelance writer based in Minnesota. She can be reached at maurakeller@yahoo.com.

Establishing reciprocal relationships in the industry is also important to the team. There are a couple of small builders in the area that Vold maintains a cordial relation-

ship with and they help each other when possible, as well as supporting other local businesses.

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PERFORMANCE

MARCH 2022

Fuel Pumps p.50

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Feel the Flow

Technology drives today's fuel pump market.

By John Carollo

Upgraded fuel pumps and systems are vital to the performance of high-horsepower engines. (Photo courtesy Aeromotive Inc.)

Among the first things learned in our industry is that racing and performance is all about catching up to technology—and maybe even leading it if you work hard enough.

One area where tech is a galloping monster is performance fuel pumps. It's not just keeping up with better-performing engines, but with all their peripherals such as fuel management systems, data processing and so on.

Looking at this many-headed monster from a shop's perspective, let's delve into how new engine technology affects this market, mistakes shops and builders make when setting up systems, and some strong selling tips. And, of course, we'll see what is hot in performance fuel pumps.

KEEPING PACE

Powerful race and street vehicles are more commonplace than ever, requiring fuel pumps and systems that can keep pace.

"New engine technology, both on the OEM and aftermarket sides, has made it so easy to have reliable high-horsepower combinations. We see 1,000-plus-hp street combinations all the time now," says Phillip VanBuskirk, national sales manager for Aeromotive Inc. "The engine might support it, but factory fuel systems are not



Educate customers on the importance of using parts that match. (Photo courtesy Aeromotive Inc.)



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Shared information can include an explanation of flow numbers. (Photos courtesy FASS Diesel Fuel Systems)

designed for those power levels. Upgrading not only the fuel pump but the whole system is key. Shops need to look at the pump, wiring, filters, regulator and line sizes to make sure they feed the engine with the fuel it needs.”

New tech usually means product updates. Josh Thornton, marketing director for FASS Diesel Fuel Systems, explains.

“High-pressure common rail fuel systems (HPCR), which are found on most new diesel engines, have much tighter tolerances and run at much higher pressures than older mechanical injection systems,” he says. “HPCR fuel systems require much finer particulate filtration, and water contamination can be extremely damaging. Our FASS System really helps with the longevity of the HPCR system with our Extreme Water Separator along with removing entrained air and air vapor, which increases lubricity in the injection pump and the fuel injectors.”

Over on the gasoline side, Evan Perkins, digital content manager for Holley, gives this example: “New engine technology such as flex-fuel compatibility has required manufacturers to develop bigger drop-in fuel pump solutions, especially with late-model vehicles. Because ethanol requires significantly more fuel flow than gasoline, higher-flow fuel pumps are an immediate need as horsepower rises, especially with forced induction.”

Brandon McDaniel, senior technical product specialist at DeatschWerks, explains how fuel pumps work with today’s computers.

“More complex OEM and aftermarket standalone ECUs have allowed for infinitely

variable control of the fuel pump and strategically staged fuel pump systems. The ability to control pumps this way allows for higher-horsepower cars to have tamer and more streetable manners than ever before.”

Jim Craig, racing product manager for Weldon High Performance, says innovation is nothing new in this market.

“Our 2345-A was the first electric fuel pump capable of flowing 200-plus gph at 80 psi while only drawing 20 amps. This pump was introduced in late 2002,” he says. “These fuel pumps utilize a tool steel pumping element that allows for creating the most efficient brush-type motor available.”

Looking at the big picture, Rob Scharfenberg, chief engineer at Fuelab, notes how new engine technology has pushed fuel demands higher and higher to deliver increased power.

“This has created a greater demand for higher flow rates and improved perfor-

mance packed into smaller and smaller sizes,” he says. “Fuelab has responded by expanding our line for higher flow rates with new configurations that allow higher-performing systems in tighter spaces—like fuel modules in modern vehicles.”

WHAT TO WATCH FOR

With things happening so quickly, there’s more chance for errors to occur. So, what are some common mistakes shops and builders need to avoid when setting up a performance fuel system?

“Sizing the fuel pump too small or just barely adequate (leaving the stock pump in place) is a common mistake,” says Perkins. “Allowing room for growth in the system is always a good idea.”

Of course, installing a fuel pump that’s too large for the given application is a problem as well, Craig explains.

“For fuel pump selection, bigger is not



New tech usually means product updates. (Photo courtesy FASS Diesel Fuel Systems)

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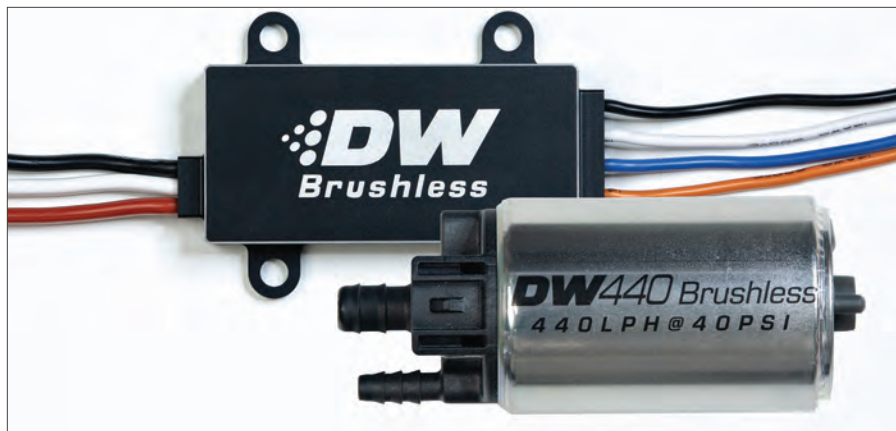
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More complex OEM and aftermarket standalone ECUs allow for infinitely variable control of the fuel pump and strategically staged fuel pump systems. (Photo courtesy DeatschWerks)

always the best answer,” he says. “It is always best to size the pump for the actual horsepower the application will produce to not over-fuel the system, which results in poor performance and unreliable operation.”

And that problem is no less evident in diesels, adds Thornton.

“It’s very common for customers and installers to select a FASS System that is oversized for the horsepower levels of the truck. For instance, if someone were to install a 290-gph system on a truck that only would require a 100-gph system, the customer will notice higher sound output from the unit,” he says. “Though this doesn’t have any negative effects on performance or reliability, the customer could be concerned about the (additional) sound output.”

It’s a question of understanding the complete system.



Size the pump for the actual horsepower the application will produce. (Photo courtesy Weldon High Performance)

“A common issue we see with shops is not getting all the parts or all the correct parts to support the combination they are planning for,” says VanBuskirk. “It is important to have the correct parts all working together. Customers try to save money where they can and end up costing themselves more later. When shops educate their customers on why all the correct parts need to be used together, it makes for a happier customer in the long term.”

Ancillary components may also be a source of confusion, says Scharfenberg.

“Most mistakes we see happening when setting up a performance fuel system (stem from) a lack of consideration for adequate plumbing performance upstream of the fuel pump,” he reports. “Fuel pumps can suffer greatly due to a restricted inlet, and these restrictions can cause damage to the pump and cause debris to be created. To avoid this, installers must read all instructions to ensure they follow these sensitive guidelines.”

Questions have also arisen concerning brushless pumps using external controllers.

“Like with our 496xx Series in-tank fuel pumps, most of the time these brushless controllers (electronics) have been built-in to our pumps, making wiring like other fuel pumps. Now that the controller is separated on some models, our customers enjoy extra mounting and configuration options,” Scharfenberg notes. “This comes with risk, as new wiring connections are made that include the motor phase wires—three wires that brushless motors must use that are not power, ground or a signal of any kind. They must be wired with care and have low resistance. They must



For fuel pump selection, bigger is not always the best answer. (Photo courtesy Weldon High Performance)

be independent from other wires and when installed incorrectly can lead to controller damage.”

Wandering too far off the specs is another notable issue, McDaniel says.

“One common mistake we see is removing or bypassing the OEM pressure control, slosh control and scavenging systems inside the factory fuel tank. These systems are vital to keeping the engine fed with fuel during normal daily and spirited driving. They also allow for the full use of the entire tank of fuel.”

He notes that many RWD and AWD cars have split or saddle-style fuel tanks.

“Venturi systems allow fuel to be drawn from the saddle tank and supply the fuel pump. Removing or disabling these types of systems within the factory fuel pump module by drilling holes or removing pieces (to install a larger fuel pump) can cause the engine to run lean after a certain amount of time, or run out of fuel 50-100 miles earlier than it would otherwise.”

As always, suppliers strongly recommend installers read and follow all written instructions to avoid potential issues.

MAKE THE SALE

There’s obviously a lot of information to convey to a customer interested in upgrading their fuel pump/fuel system. Suppliers offer suggestions on how to begin.

Hot Fuel Pump Products

■ **HOT PRODUCTS:** Late-Model Drop-In Pump Options

■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Available for popular Mustang, Camaro, Cadillac, GMC and Ford truck, and Dodge Charger/Challenger/Hellcat fitments; drop-in module style utilizes factory gasket and lock ring; billet cap; incorporates OEM fuel level sender, jet siphon and pickup.

*Aeromotive Inc.
Phillip VanBuskirk
National Sales Manager*

■ **HOT PRODUCT:** DW440 Brushless 440-lhp Fuel Pump

■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** No-wear parts increase the pump's lifespan and fuel compatibility; brushless pump controller allows programming options; higher voltage capabilities allow the pump to boost to 20-plus volts; compact size; built-in venturi outlet for OEM fitments.

*DeatschWerks
Brandon McDaniel
Sr. Technical Product Specialist*

■ **HOT PRODUCTS:** Titanium Signature Series Fuel Pumps

■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Available in flow rates from 100 to 290 gph; Extreme Water Separator filters rust, dirt and all other particulates down to 2 microns absolute while removing over 99% of the water that can be found in diesel fuel; third-party laboratory tested.

*FASS Diesel Fuel Systems
Josh Thornton
Marketing Director*

■ **HOT PRODUCTS:** 496xx Series In-Tank Brushless Fuel Pumps

■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Fit into modern fuel tank modules; turbine-style pump construction ensures quiet operation; flow rates up to 500 lph; efficiency and speed control capability; external pump controller; kits include everything needed to install the system.

*Fuelab
Rob Scharfenberg
Chief Engineer*

■ **HOT PRODUCTS:** EFI Fuel Pumps

■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Vast line offers an array of EFI solutions for everything from race cars to daily drivers; drop-in-style pumps focus on ease of installation and EFI conversions; in-tank fuel pump modules are extremely popular; simplified universal fitments.

*Holley
Evan Perkins
Digital Content Manager*

■ **HOT PRODUCT:** 16420-A Billet-Bodied Carb Series Fuel Pump

■ **FEATURES & BENEFITS:** Supports 3,000-plus hp on racing gas and 1,500 hp on methanol; all-steel pump element with 10 vanes that smooth pulses; Teflon motor shaft lip seal to prevent leaks; motor shaft supported by an oversized bearing and precision-ground sealing.

*Weldon High Performance
Jim Craig
Racing Product Manager*

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PERFORMANCE



Allowing room for growth in the system is always a good idea. (Photo courtesy Holley)



New engine technology such as flex-fuel compatibility has required manufacturers to develop new drop-in fuel pump solutions, especially for late-model vehicles. (Photo courtesy Holley)

“Listen to the customer, ask questions as to what the vehicle’s application really will be, and then choose or guide the customer to those correct products,” says Weldon’s Craig. “Also, do not hesitate to contact the fuel pump/system manufacturer you choose to work with and work with their tech/sales team to come up with the best system to fit the project.”

DeatschWerks’ McDaniel recommends

shops create or share education on performance fuel pump technology and its value over OEM pumps.

“Keeping high-volume, application-specific fuel pumps in stock to quickly fulfill customer purchases always leads to increased sales,” he adds. “Also, bundling fuel pumps and other high-volume performance parts into *power packages* is a great way to advertise and bolster sales.”

That shared information can include an explanation of flow numbers, Thornton says.

“An excellent point to sell on with the FASS System is that it promotes superior filtration over OEM fuel filters,” he notes. “The system is excellent for performance applications with its ability to provide higher fuel flow rates, but the improved filtration is the absolute best selling point.”

Taking a short sidestep away from tech-

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New engine technology has pushed fuel demands higher and higher to deliver increased power. (Photo courtesy Fuelab)



It has never been easier to find a good fit for your customer's vehicle. (Photo courtesy Fuelab)

nology, Holley's Perkins suggests "touting the benefits of in-tank pump options is a good means to increase sales for road-going vehicles. It can be tempting to lean toward less-expensive external fuel pumps for EFI conversions, but that is almost always the less-desirable option."

The good news, says Fuelab's Scharfenberg, is that with the new options available today, it has never been easier to find a

good fit for your customer's vehicle.

"If you are unfamiliar with these new options, the best tip is to explore what options manufacturers offer," he recommends. "Not only will you have a more reliable system, but a system that can be easier to install with lower costs."

Some of the information is offered online.

"Checking out the *Pump Finder* on our

website will give you the tools needed. Our technical team and engineers have laid out the *Power Planner* to help you piece together just about every combination you could need," says Aeromotive's VanBuskirk. "Using the diagrams to make sure you have covered all the parts needed will help you capitalize on related sale items as well as making sure your customer has the right parts for the job." **TS**

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Once unheard of, the modification of Porsche vehicles is now an accepted, exciting part of the aftermarket.



By Tony Thacker

OUTLAW PORSCHE

Once unheard of, the market has since turned.

I delude myself thinking that the Outlaw Porsche is a relatively new phenomenon. In fact, the customization of Porsche's venerable 911 and its derivatives has been going on since it was introduced in 1963—yes, almost 60 years ago.

There was a time, though, when the very idea of customizing a Porsche was anathema—something that you didn't do or even contemplate. Then, in the mid-1990s, things began to change and a Porsche hot rod became as desirable as a '32 Ford hot rod.

According to noted writer Keith Seume: "German Rainer Buchmann of the bb company was a pioneer with his outrageous 930 Turbo conversions as far back as 1973. Known as the *100,000 Mark Porsches*, they were the talk of the scene at the time."

One of the first to get on board here in

the U.S. was Rod Emory, who, with his wife, Amy, started Emory Motorsports in 1996. Emory traces his lineage back to the late-'40s and the famed SO-CAL Speed Shop. His grandfather, Neil, helped shape the SO-CAL Streamliner, at the time acclaimed as *The World's Fastest Hot Rod*.

PERSONALIZED PORSCHE

Emory's goal was "to build the most iconic, personalized Porsche 356s on the planet and to deliver a customer experience unlike any other in the Porsche marketplace."

It didn't hurt that Emory's father, Gary, operated Porsche Parts Obsolete, one of the world's foremost Porsche parts suppliers, in McMinnville, Oregon. And, just like that, the coin flipped and hot rod Outlaw Porsches became acceptable and, in fact, desirable.

Of course, custom Porsches here and there were nothing new. Renowned custom painter Dean Jeffries famously modified his 356 Carrera in 1956—mods that were not exactly popular with the cognoscenti at the time.

Then, in 1964, singer Janis Joplin bought a 356 C and handed it over to her roadie, Dave Richards, who applied images of Big Brother and the Holding Company and much, much more and called it *The History of the Universe*. The car survives and is regarded by some as a classic (you can be the judge).

Porsche introduced the 911 in 1963 and, despite it only initially having 130 hp, the factory continued to develop it into a real enthusiast's car that built a very dedicated following. Hundreds, possibly thousands of race wins enhanced its reputation, as did



In the mid-1990s, things began to change and a Porsche hot rod became as desirable as a '32 Ford hot rod.



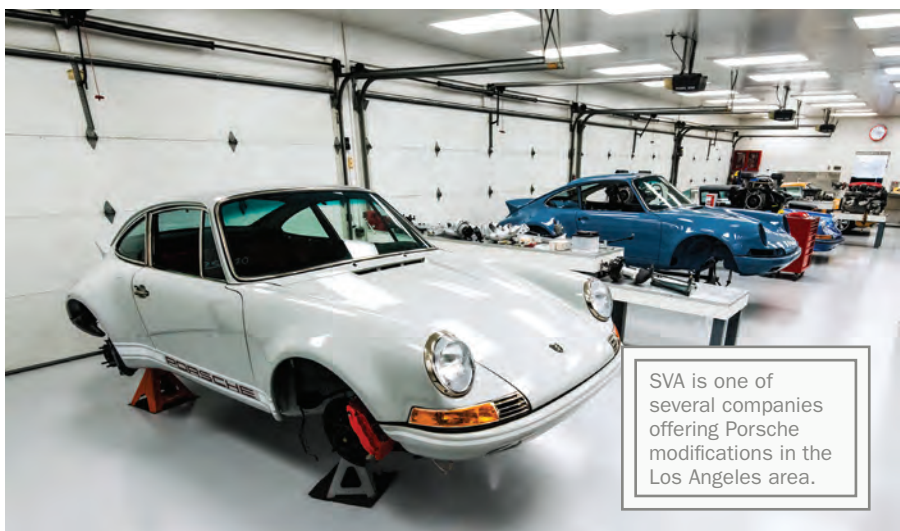
the 1973 introduction of the Carrera RS. In 1989, Porsche gave us the 911-derived 964 Carrera 4 with AWD and a 3.6L engine that reached 247 hp. A RWD Carrera 2 followed in 1990, then, in '91, the 315-hp Turbo that jumped to 355 hp in '93. The introduction of these ever-faster factory offerings kicked off a Euro-centric aftermarket led by companies such as bb, dp motorsport, Gemballa, Rinspeed, RUF and Strosek, to name a few. The autobahns were littered with body kits and horsepower.

SONGS OF THE ROAD

In the early 2000s, things in the Porsche world shifted to top gear with the arrival of Rob Dickinson and Singer Vehicle Design (SVD). Dickinson, cousin of Iron Maiden lead singer Bruce Dickinson, grew up in England and did two years of art school before joining McLaren F1 designer Peter Stevens at Lotus Cars.

Realizing he didn't want to be a car designer, he left to become a singer in the rock band Catherine Wheel. However, after a successful music career, Dickinson about-faced and decided that perhaps he wanted to be a car designer after all.

He founded SVD in Los Angeles, and it didn't hurt that celebrities such as Jerry Seinfeld and Magnus Walker embraced the concept.



SVA is one of several companies offering Porsche modifications in the Los Angeles area.



Rod Emory of Emory Motorsports set a goal "to build the most iconic, personalized Porsche 356s on the planet."



SVA strives to make each build unique.



Is Janis Joplin's modified 356 C a classic? You be the judge.

SVD has a rather officious agreement/disclaimer for journalists that makes it difficult to write about the company. That said, Wikipedia says SVD restores and modifies 964s.

Having seen several of its reimaged vehicles, I have to say that the attention to detail, fit, finish and overall presentation are excellent. It has been reported that the

company has sold more than 200 vehicles.

At the time SVD entered the market, *European Car* magazine was writing about the Porsche phenomenon and editor Greg Emmerson, who is now with I.D. Agency, took a closer look.

He spoke to the owner of a prominent Porsche tuning shop about the impact of

Singer on the market. "He was very positive, overall," Emmerson says. "He indicated that it was a big market with room for everybody, and that Singer had raised the ceiling of quality and price, which in turn had elevated the entire market. He saw it as a positive thing."

MORE TO LOVE

Another LA-based company is SVAuto.com (SVA), established in 1985 by Simo Veharanta as a restoration and export business. SVA has grown to be a licensed and bonded California Motor Vehicle Dealer specializing in the restoration and customization of classic Porsches.

It's a very bespoke operation and each build is quite different, evidenced by the two cars we were able to examine: a 1979 911 Martini RSR and an '82 RSR.

The Martini car was built as a tribute to the 1973 Targa Florio race-winning 911, complete with OTT graphics that look wild on the street. The car features a 3.4L engine with twin water-cooled EFR turbos, an SVA intercooler and a MoTeC engine management system. It even has electric air conditioning.

Known as *Backdate*, the far more subtle '82 RSR is SVA's take on the 911. The body is enhanced with steel turbo fender flares, custom steel bumpers and custom carbon fiber front and rear spoilers. Under the aluminum ducktail decklid resides an amazing Kinsler-injected 3.9L engine that produced 466 hp on the World dyno. The engine and the car are truly works of automotive art.

Of course, SVA is not the only company applying magic to venerable classic Porsches. According to owner Veharanta, "There are probably 10 companies in the LA region operating at the upper level, including SVA, of course, but there are probably 30 in total, all reimaging the 911 and variants thereof."

You have to admit it's a robust market that appears to have some long legs. And, of course, this is all ICE technology—we haven't even touched on the electric conversion market that is likewise quite robust, but that's a whole other story. **TS**



Born in England, **TONY THACKER** is an accredited automotive journalist, author and book publisher, and served as marketing director at the famed SO-CAL Speed Shop.

A "digital Taycan art car" celebrates Porsche's new fully electric model and its history of partnering with fine artists. (Photo courtesy porsche.com)



‘ART CAR’ CELEBRATES FULLY ELECTRIC TAYCAN

Porsche has a long history of mixing its latest models with world-renowned artists in the popular Art Car program. In that spirit, Porsche Cars Australia commissioned a bespoke Australian artwork livery by contemporary artist Nigel Sense to celebrate the fully electric Porsche Taycan.

Sense's artwork was transformed into vehicle livery on a Taycan before being photographed to create three unique digital works of art in the form of multimedia photographs.

In collaboration with the German NFT collectibles start-up Fanzone.io, the Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs) were auctioned via the online platform superrare.com, a digital art marketplace using Ethereum technology.

Forming part of the celebrations of 70 Years of Porsche in Australia, the collaboration represents the first digital artwork project based on the blockchain technology Ethereum for Porsche in Australia, according to the company. The NFTs were minted in a carbon-neutral way by offsetting them via the Porsche Impact program, and proceeds of the auction will be donated to the Australian Centre for Contemporary Art.

"The Taycan is Porsche's first fully electric car and represents a new era in the company's history," says Daniel Schmollinger, managing director and CEO, Porsche Cars Australia. "It is also the most digitally advanced car Porsche has ever created, and we wanted to celebrate this by pushing the boundaries of traditional artwork on cars—turning inspired artwork into a digital asset."

A local neo-expressionist and social expressionist artist, Sense's pieces are popular among Porsche owners.

"My work is maps and painted lines that lead to the unknown, with symbols and imagery that I have corrected on the way," says Sense. "It's the emotional feeling of movement going from one place to another—that excitement to see what's over the horizon. The beauty of living a life well-lived."

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Tundra Valve Spring Kit

Manley Performance, Lakewood, New Jersey, presents a Valve Spring Kit for DOHC 5.7L 3UR-FE V-8 engines found in Toyota Tundra, Sequoia, Land Cruiser and Lexus LX 570 applications. The new kit features a set of 32 valve springs that are wound from steel alloy and engineered for use in conjunction with aftermarket camshafts that have lifts to 0.480-inch. The springs have a 0.990-inch outside diameter and can be used with the factory spring seat. They're rated at 75 pounds installed and 205 pounds open (0.970-inch). Titanium retainers are included.



2021 Mustang GT Tuning

Superchips, Ogden, Utah, presents expanded tuning coverage for 2021 5.0L Ford Mustang GT models, with support now available in the Flashpaq 1845 handheld tuner and the color touchscreen Dashpaq+ 10601. The tuners deliver improved drivability, greater power throughout the rpm curve and better throttle response. Calibrations provide optimized transmission shift strategies to transfer peak power to the ground.

Tundra Supercharger Kit

Magnuson Superchargers, Ventura, California, presents a new Supercharger Kit for 2020-'21 Toyota Tundra applications. The highly efficient TVS1900



supercharger is matched to the Tundra's 5.7L V-8 engine, producing more than 540 hp and 535 pound-feet of torque at the crank.

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Mustang Road Race Brake Kit

Wilwood Disc Brakes, Camarillo, California, presents a new Road Race Brake Package for 2005-'14 Ford Mustang applications. The kit features the high-capacity braking and heat-management of the GN4R/ST caliper coupled with 13.00-inch floating rotors on hats utilizing a simple lug-drive mounting system. It is in full compliance with all current SCCA specifications for American Sedan, and is also well-suited to NASA classes and other sanctioning bodies requiring four-piston calipers and OE production S197 spindles.

GM Bed Repair Panels

Holley Performance Products, Bowling Green, Kentucky, presents Holley Classic Trucks Chevrolet/GMC GMT400 Bed Repair Panels. An easy solution to repair rust or dents in 1988-'98 Chevrolet/GMC truck beds, the heavy-gauge steel repair panels are manufactured with quality tools for a precise fit and EDP-coated for corrosion protection. **TS**



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Grab the Bull By the Horns

Hagerty has unveiled its fifth annual Bull Market list featuring the enthusiast cars and trucks that the company's market experts predict will increase in value over the next 12 months.

The list is not intended for get-rich-quick flippers, but rather for future owners who want to find, buy and drive a cool vehicle they love.

"At Hagerty, we believe that life is too short to drive boring cars, and the 2022 Bull Market list shows how folks can affordably drive their dreams," says Larry Webster, senior vice president of media and editorial for Hagerty. "Our seasoned experts employed Hagerty's massive database to name 10 cars that people can buy, enjoy for a few years and then sell to the next enthusiast for about what they paid or maybe even a bit more. There are now very few barriers to enjoying the classic-car hobby."

This year's Bull Market list features vehicles built between 1963 and 2012, including sports, luxury and muscle cars, as well as a few SUVs.

Here are Hagerty's Bull Market Quick Takes, with excellent condition starting prices in parentheses.

1965-'70 CADILLAC DEVILLE (\$28,800)

This generation of Cadillacs remains highly affordable—particularly on a dollar-per-pound scale—and they draw plenty of eyeballs and thumbs-up.

1969-'74 FERRARI 246 DINO (\$365,800)

The Dino is considered one of the greatest roadgoing Ferraris of all time, for a price that amounts to an auction buyer's premium on most other vintage Ferraris.

1983-'97 LAND ROVER DEFENDER (\$61,400)

There's an urbane glamour to driving the aluminum-bodied earth-roamer that started it all, whose lineage dates back to the 1948 original.



Hagerty's fifth annual Bull Market list features the enthusiast cars and trucks that the company's market experts predict will increase in value over the next 12 months. (Photo courtesy Hagerty Media)

1979-'85 MAZDA RX-7 (\$17,600)

A lithe sports car that turned the performance car segment on its head by exploiting the tiny rotary engine's massive potential. Huge production figures mean that good ones are still easy to find—for now.

1963-'67 MERCEDES-BENZ 230SL (\$80,500)

The 230SL also goes by the nickname *Pagoda*, thanks to the functional shape of its hardtop, and the rest of the car is an exercise in understated elegance that never goes out of style.

1966-'67 PONTIAC GTO (\$100,200)

There will only ever be one original muscle car, and the GTO is it. For 1966, the car received a styling update that ushered in the *Coke bottle* shape, and prices are heating up.

1992-'95 PORSCHE 968 (\$38,000)

The Porsche 968 is the ultimate evolution

of the Porsche 944 and 924 before it, and its hatchback practicality and great highway fuel economy make it a viable daily driver.

1985-'95 SUZUKI SAMURAI (\$10,200)

Everything about the 2,000-pound Suzuki Samurai feels light and toylike, but they were well-built and extremely hardy in the finest Japanese tradition.

2008-'12 TESLA ROADSTER SPORT (\$97,100)

The Roadster's historical significance can only grow as electric cars take over and, thanks to a chassis borrowed from Lotus, it will always be a hoot to drive.

1975-'93 VOLVO 245 (\$15,800)

With a build quality designed to outlast mankind, it could just be the last car you ever buy.

A full analysis of the cars on this year's list is available at hagerty.com/bullmarket. **TS**



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