

Q&A with Continental's Dan Caciolo

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Dan Caciolo is head of NA IAM Product Management & Catalog, Smart Mobility (SMY), North America Automotive, Continental, and is responsible for managing the company's Independent Aftermarket and ATE Brake System Parts programs. He joined Continental in 2008 as a senior product manager and advanced to the position of head of product management in 2014.

Prior to Continental, Caciolo served at Siemens VDO Automotive as a product manager and marketing analyst from 2004 to 2008. In addition to his 18-year career in the automotive parts business, Caciolo also worked in his family-owned Ford dealerships in a wide variety of roles – from detailing to selling cars.

Caciolo has a BA in Marketing Communications from Roger Williams University and an MBA in International Business from Southern New Hampshire University with a focus in PMP (Project Management Professional).

In this exclusive Q&A, Caciolo talks about AAPEX, the latest ADAS, Smart Mobility and the latest innovations from Continental.

Tell us about some of the latest product innovations from Continental. In the past year, the company has announced new products in a number of categories, including engine management, battery cooling fans and filters. What other exciting innovations is the company working on at the moment?

Our team is constantly focused on bringing innovative new products to the aftermarket, especially with original equipment replacement parts. In addition to our recent Continental product expansions and



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line extensions, we've introduced our newest advance in OE TPMS sensor technology with the next generation of REDI-Sensor Multi-application TPMS Sensors. This innovation gives service shops the ability to replace over 290 different OE sensors and handle over 90% of vehicle applications while only stocking four part numbers. That translates to a big savings in product inventory while delivering exceptional coverage for over 168 million VIO from model years 2002 to 2022.

We've also boosted our ATE Brake Systems offering with a new OE electric parking brake (EPB) caliper program and a new, advanced, state-of-the-art 5.1 DOT brake fluid that is being specified by more

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and more carmakers for their vehicles. These are excellent examples of how Continental is keeping pace with the latest automotive technology and making the necessary replacement and service parts readily available to aftermarket distributors and service shops.

OE heritage and quality is an important differentiator for Continental. What are some the benefits this provides to your customers and the benefits for your brand reputation?

Trust is the first thought that comes to mind. To me, quality has always been defined by the ability to trust what you are buying, and that quickly translates to the confidence we want our customers to have when they recommend and install our products. Our Smart Mobility segment and our aftermarket brands hold to the same quality standards as our OE segment, which maintains the highest level in the automotive business.

How will the increasing adoption of ADAS into new vehicles impact vehicle repair?

The OE fitment rate of ADAS in North America has made steady gains since its inception and soon almost every vehicle on the road in North America will have some form of ADAS as standard equipment. These new systems will add an additional layer of complexity to vehicle service and repair, and the aftermarket will have to be ready as these vehicles age and come in for service. Moving forward, it is critical that the aftermarket and its OE suppliers maintain a strong relationship so they can maintain the flow of knowledge and parts that will be needed to effectively service and calibrate these systems.

How does Continental define 'Smart Mobility' today and what is the company's role in this world?

Smart technologies have been part of our everyday lives for quite some time and now they are starting to become a valuable part of our mobility. More specifically, in the vehicles we drive and how we drive them. For Continental, Smart Mobility is the application of smart technologies that enhance the drive while adding value and safety to the driver, such as connected vehicles that analyze data in real time, which can be used to help reduce traffic congestion or identify service and repair requirements.

Continental offers technologies that enable seamless networking of the driver and vehicle with the infrastructure, other vehicles, mobile devices, and the cloud, so that all road users can access information and services securely at all times around the world.

What are your thoughts on the continuing supply chain challenges? How have they impacted Continental and how has the company responded?

While product demand continues to stay strong, it seems as if dealing with a new shortage or delay of some kind on a daily basis has become the new global normal. Throughout the pandemic and current global supply chain woes, Continental has taken several proactive measures to stay ahead of the curve and continue to supply its partners with critical replacement parts and diagnostic tools. This involved advanced demand planning, extended forecasting, logistics and freight optimization, developed alternate component and raw material sourcing strategies, and where all else fails, incorporated engineering and validating redesigns.

What's on the agenda for AAPEX?

At AAPEX, we hopefully expect to “spark some new opportunities,” which also happens to be the tagline for this year's show. We plan to showcase several new products in our booth, including the next generation of REDI-Sensor Sensors, Active Grill Shutters, EPB Brake Calipers, Autodiagnos service tools, and a new line of filtration products, the latest addition to our fast-growing aftermarket products portfolio. But most importantly, we want to get valuable face-to-face time with our customers and peers in the industry. It is the people that make this business thrive, and it is refreshing to be able to interact in person. In addition, between key customer meetings I personally plan to stroll Joe's Garage and the trade show floor.

