

Wheels Now! Tips to Keep Wheels Rolling

Tip#2 - Navigating and Choosing Wheel Partners

Finding the right partners and suppliers are critical to any successful business. Finding and choosing the right partners will help keep your wheels, supplied, serviced and rolling. Here are some considerations and tips when sourcing wheel partners.

BEFORE YOU START - Get prepared. Know what your wheel and wheel parts needs are by conducting a Vehicle Equipment Wheel Survey. (See *Wheels Now Tip#1*)

ESTABLISH YOUR GOAL – To find wheel partners and service providers that fit your needs, know your equipment, and can service all your wheel, rim and parts needs thru a mutually beneficial relationship.

- **Find partners that share your values** - As partners you will represent their business and they ought to be representing yours. Honesty, trust, respect and reputations are on the line. Pick partners that lend credibility to your business, stand with you and by their products and services.
- **Identify and Rank your wants, needs and expectations in a partner** – Quality Brands, Trustworthy, Sufficient Inventory, Experience, Proximity, Price, Professional Service, Respected, Resourceful, Reliable, and so forth. Create your own wish list, dream partner and/or scorecard.
- **The Record** – Look for partners with proven track records, are well experienced, have tenured staff and a history providing services and products you seek. Good partners will bring skills and experience to your business and be a valued resource for you. They understand business cycles and impacts and can help keep you abreast of rising tides, opportunities and downturns. Their ability to weather challenges and remain soundly stable will give you the confidence to rely on them.
- **The Products** – Identify the products and services you want and need. Find partners with proven products, brands and services. New products, lines or companies should be carefully considered and assessed before purchasing. Know what you're buying, what you're getting and where it's coming from in order to have the confidence that your partners are standing behind you and their products.
- **Size Matters** – Big factories have big staff, big schedules, big customers, big production runs and big orders to fill. A smaller partner may be more nimble, efficient and quicker to fill your orders. Too small and you may find that they have less inventory, limited product offerings, different cost structures, capabilities or options. A partner somewhere in middle may provide the best of both worlds. Find the right match by asking questions of your partners and sharing what matters most to you and your business.
- **Relationships Matter** – Knowing the right people in the right places will do wonders for you and your business. Identify partners with the resources and connections you need to succeed. Having a variety of contacts and connections at various levels throughout organizations may not seem all

that important, but if you only contact one or two people it's hard to navigate when problems arise, track an order status, file a warranty claim, get pricing, product availability or other information.

- **OEM's and Dealers** - Not all OEM's make their own wheels or parts. Most OEM's don't make their wheels at all. OEM's and their dealers have contracts and access to wheel factories that make their wheels. Some OEM's create proprietary wheel or part designs with the factory that are available only to them while the vast majority of parts are common. Dealers have access to inventory or stock wheels or parts. Dealers are a source and may be your best source for certain items, but not necessarily your only source, especially common goods.
- **Growing** - Partners that work well together, grow together. Partners should be supporting each others' growth. Good partnerships are not one sided, but are mindful of opportunities; they uncover them, create them and share them for mutual and maximum benefit.
- **Communicators** – Good partners communicate needs, wants and expectations openly and routinely. They offer advice, guidance, recommendations and insights. They share information willingly and help you to achieve your goals. Good partners also make themselves available.

Like any relationship, good business partnerships take time to find, nurture and make last. We hope these tips and considerations will help you find your match.

Contact Us: 800.782.5145

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