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Comments from the Editor



Ways for greater trade in auto parts

During our visit to the Latin Tire & Auto Parts Expo in Panama City, we had the opportunity to see firsthand the operation of the emblematic Canal, along whose 82 kilometers of length, 14,132 ship transits were recorded last year. In 2021, this represented 2.4% of global maritime trade.

This road with centuries-old history located on an artificial lake that connects 180 maritime routes, which reach 1,920 ports in 170 countries, marks the economy of a country with a vehicle fleet that exceeds one and a half million vehicles. 75% of these circulate in the capital, and most of them travel with Japanese and Korean brands.

Even though sales of new vehicles have decreased in this Central American country, demand for spare parts has persisted at a good pace.

Distributors realize this by offering replacement parts from original equipment manufacturers (OEM) well valued by their customers. These are supported by the average price reached between concession agencies and the respective manufacturer to introduce the product to the market after paying the corresponding customs duties.

However, in different Latin American countries some customs-type work persists and others that we collect in the main article of this issue. We hope that these can be noticed by the different governments to boost imports and exports of spare parts, and thereby encourage foreign investment.

Each country has its own way: from the request of Argentine auto parts manufacturers to reduce an import tariff on certain capital goods that affects national production to the measures demanded by the sector in Colombia to simplify procedures for importing inputs not produced in the country.

Meanwhile, Mexico has taken advantage of free trade agreements such as the T-MEC with the increase in the Regional Content Value (RCV) of the parts and components imposed by it, which, together with the relocation of Asian companies, has resulted in an increase in its participation in the US market.

However, some weaknesses and threats identified by professionals in the same market persist and must be addressed so that production and marketing can be aligned in the future. In response to this, there will be more escape routes from any commercial imbalance with situations such as the recent Canal drought.

Federico Duarte
Editor

SIDEM STEERING & SUSPENSION.

DRIVEN BY FOCUS. LED BY EXCELLENCE.

Sidem is the leading designer and manufacturer of steering and suspension parts for the assembly and aftermarket automotive industry. The family-owned company, existing since 1933, offers more than 9000 references and over 4 million items available from stock for almost all European and Asian car brands. This combined with the own European R&D, production and logistics center, make Sidem the specialist in steering and suspension car parts with OE quality or better.

SIDEM.EU



SIDEM celebrates 90 years of crossing borders

By Aftermarket International



The opening of new markets in America is part of the sustained growth of this expert company in the automotive sector, which gained further momentum 40 years ago with the acquisition by the Verfaillie family.

Ninety years ago in the Hounslow Borough, west of Greater London in the UK, Standard Link Innovation Limited could only envision a growing world beyond the River Thames. However, barely a year after being incorporated as SIDEM, the main center of activity of this manufacturer specializing in the design and production of parts and suspension for the aftermarket had already moved to Antwerp, Belgium.

It was 1934. That year a production unit for spare parts for automobiles was launched

in parallel at a plant in Auderghem, on the outskirts of Brussels. Thus began the story of a company that over time would stand out with quality and product range, manufactured in Europe, becoming known across borders and other continents.

An unstoppable drive

In 1983, Walter Verfaillie acquired SIDEM and took charge of the company. His daughter, Gwen Verfaillie decided to follow his professional footsteps after his death in 2010, and who today leads the company as CEO.

"When my father bought SIDEM in 1983, he knew how to give the company a new direction. Production moved from Lichtervelde to Roselare (Belgium) before opening the production facility in central

Europe. His passion and his entrepreneurial spirit have always inspired me," says Verfaillie, who started working at SIDEM just after graduating. Because of her family history, the automotive world was not new to her.

In 1986, the company's growth would become evident when it moved to new facilities in Roselare, Belgian city, with 10,000 square meters.

In 2001, the company opened a plant in Romania and significantly increased its production capacity. A decade later, in 2011, and now with Gwen Verfaillie in charge, SIDEM moved to an automated distribution center in Gullegem, Belgium. The new headquarters reached 12,000 m² within a 27,000 m² business park.

This expansion led to further increase in SIDEM's product range: control arms, ball joints, tie rods, axle joints, bushings, stabilizer links, strut mounts and steering rack gaiters. Today for almost all vehicles, both passenger and light commercial, SIDEM has the solution for European, Asian and other nameplates, with more than 4 million parts in inventory.

Since 2019, SIDEM has had an industry leading digital catalog where customers can search for steering and suspension parts.

From Europe to the world

Iwan Loewen, Business Development Manager for North and South America, says that SIDEM's premium products, made in Romania, are developed in-house with a strong focus on longevity, 100% OE fitment and uncompromising safety.

"Our success on a global scale is undoubtedly due to the long collaborative relationship we maintain with distributors in local markets around the world," says Gwen Verfaillie.

Gwen further highlights SIDEM as the "one-stop shop" specialist with the best product coverage in the industry. She further reemphasized: "the most important reasons to work with SIDEM are quality, reliability and stability. For this reason, customers choose SIDEM as their long-term trusted partner."

This is what has motivated partners outside of Europe: from partners for the Middle East and Africa to making the jump over the Atlantic and growing throughout America with clients in countries like the United States, Canada, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Brazil, Paraguay, Chile and Uruguay. SIDEM also collaborates with partners in countries such as Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia.

Certified quality

"If by experience SIDEM believes OE quality can be improved, the part is re-engineered," says the company, which is audited by external organizations. The Quality Management System is accredited according to ISO9001, ISO14001 and ISO45001. SIDEM is also certified according to IATF16949.



Iwan Loewen



Gwen Verfaillie





Besides the focus on the Aftermarket, SIDEM is also an OEM supplier to various premium vehicle manufacturers.

"We only bet on superior quality: we have original equipment (OEM) as the standard," says the CEO Gwen Verfallie, who points out that SIDEM is a 'tier 2' supplier in the assembly of new vehicles.

"But that is not all: top customer service also includes availability. SIDEM has an average service level of 98%, the highest score in the sector", highlights Gwen Verfallie.

A promising future

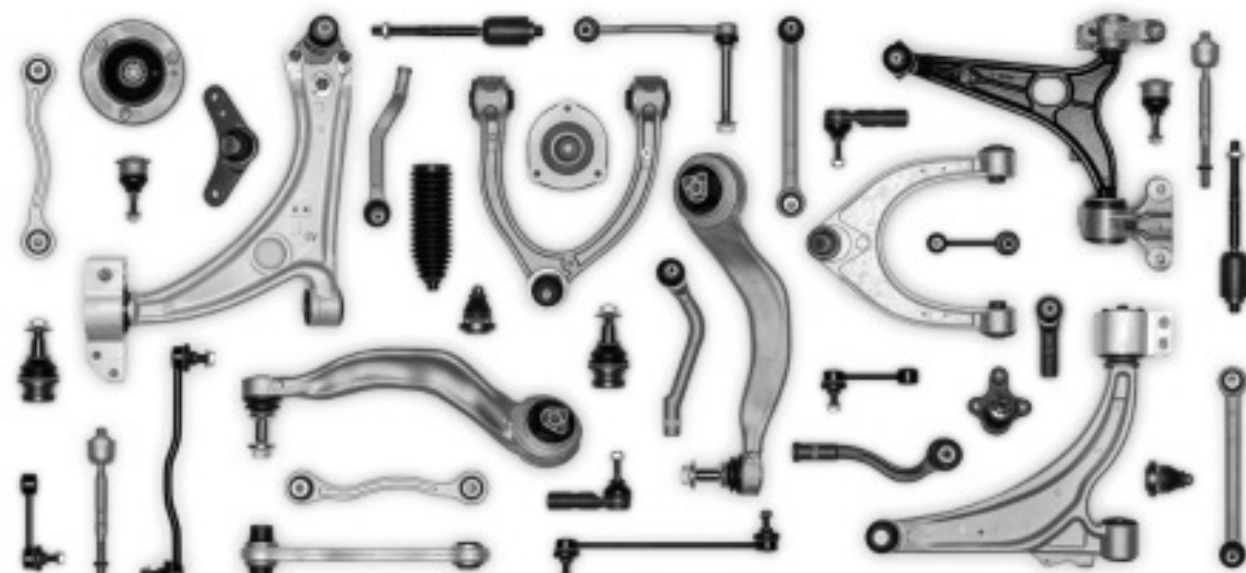
"We look forward to the future and the electrification of vehicles," says Iwan Loewen. As Electric Vehicles still need steering and suspension components, SIDEM is ready for the future!



Because electric vehicles are heavier and develop more initial torque during acceleration, there is an increased demand for our products in the aftermarket, for which SIDEM has a wide portfolio for (see box).

"It is very clear: SIDEM will continue to

focus on customer satisfaction through superior products in the segment of steering and suspension parts, maintaining the maximum coverage and level of service. Even in 'new' segments such as electric vehicles, SIDEM already has the largest product offering in the aftermarket," says Gwen Verfallie.



Specialized parts for electrical transition

As more cities adopt low emission zones and the European Union requires all new cars to be CO2 neutral by 2035, the shift towards electrification in the automotive sector is unavoidable.

The number of electric vehicles in Europe has gone from 1% in 2017 to 9% in 2021, according to the European Association of Automotive Suppliers (Clepa). Additionally, the World Economic Forum predicts that 300 million electric vehicles will be in use in the US by 2030.

SIDEM's range of EV steering and suspension parts includes 960 unique references for 32 European and Asian brands, covering 84 % of the aftermarket. No other company has that amount and quality of coverage for BEV-adapted steering and suspension parts.

Despite the shift to electric vehicles, the impact on the aftermarket for steering and suspension parts is relatively limited. However, EVs are heavier than gas-powered cars due to their battery pack, putting additional strain on steering and suspension parts. According to the company, SIDEM's range of EV parts has been designed to withstand the additional weight and torque, ensuring maximum strength and safety.

Some examples of SIDEM's designs in its EV components: larger diameter ball studs embedded in ball joints, axle joints and stabilizers; suspension arms with ball joint incorporated into the aluminum housing; silentblocks with an extra metal ring or hydraulic spaces for greater driving comfort.

For more information on SIDEM's range of steering and suspension parts for EVs and other vehicles, you can visit www.sidem.eu

