

Car Aftermarket - UK - November 2013

Report Price: £1750.00 | \$2834.04 | €2223.04

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“While the car parts aftermarket is showing signs of recovery the market remains subject to pressures caused by the increased longevity of parts, the recent economic slowdown and the threat of budget and counterfeit parts. Overcoming all of these, while a major challenge for the market, brings with it the prospect of much stronger sales in the future.”

– Neil Mason, Head of Retail Research

This report looks at the following areas:

- What impact will growing reliability of car parts have on the market?
- How can the market stand up to the challenge from budget brands?
- What impact will increased competition have on suppliers?
- How can the market deal with those drivers delaying on maintenance?
- What threat do counterfeits and part-worns pose to the OE market?

This report presents an overview of the UK car parts aftermarket. It examines a number of the most common parts that are purchased by motorists as part of the maintenance of their vehicle as well as how these parts are purchased and fitted.

The UK car parts aftermarket has recently passed through a difficult period. A combination of wider economic problems and sluggish car sales has led a growing number of drivers to either delay parts replacement or downgrade on the quality of some replacement parts. Heightened competition within the market has added to these difficulties, with the result that retail sales have been sluggish.

Yet there is evidence that the market is beginning to strengthen. Driven by higher retail prices within the tyre sector, Mintel expects the value of the replacement parts market to grow more strongly in the next few years than it has of late. While trends towards longer servicing and warranties will continue to constrain market expansion, improvements in the UK's economic outlook are set to encourage trading up and ease pressure on prices.

The car parts aftermarket sector supports a large number of players and is highly fragmented. Although brand awareness is high in the tyre sector it is low elsewhere, thereby reducing the ability of those selling and fitting parts to encourage trading up. Foreign companies are dominant, with the last decade seeing a rise in the number of Far Eastern suppliers operating in the UK.

Mintel's exclusive research suggests that tyres are the car part that is most likely to need to be replaced with around half of all drivers having purchased a tyre in the previous 12 months. Choices as to how parts are fitted are extensive, with mechanics, dealers and fast fit outlets all popular. DIY and use of family and friends, in contrast, is a much less important channel. Location, price and trust are the three key factors when choosing someone to fit parts. As for consumer attitudes, the reliability of a car part is crucial, with this being sought by around half of all drivers.

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