



Mail

Editorial



A long-term campaign

In August 2003, Bridgestone launched its first pan-European awareness campaign aimed at generating awareness for our Truck Point network to the transport industry and fleet operators. This first campaign was positive, but still has some way to go. We have decided to pursue it further this year on an even greater scale. Our main objective is not just to raise the profile of the TP network. It is also to generate further interest in Truck Point services from new fleet customers, to increase fleet contacts and to foster an ongoing business relationship with TP dealers. In addition to the campaign, the daily efforts from our Sales Companies are already bearing fruit. Just take a look in this issue at the examples of Poland and Norway - two examples to which Hungary will be added. The network coverage has also enabled Bridgestone to offer a breakdown assistance via Service Europe for the users of Giatec Mega Drive tyres. With ongoing support for the TP network, we look forward in 2004 to another year of development and reinforcement vis-à-vis our fleet customers across Europe.

PS: Since the beginning of 2004, we have a new URL for our Truck Point website: www.truckpoint-eu.com Please visit us!

Yuji Takeuchi,
Director Sales & Marketing,
Commercial Vehicle Tyres,
Bridgestone Europe NV/SA.

Expansion

Poland and Norway extend their Network

The Bridgestone Europe Network, which already has more than 1700 members, gets bigger every year. The most spectacular growth in 2004 is set to occur in Poland and Norway. The first increasing from 22 to 30 Truck Points this year, the second from 11 to 50!

From 2004, Bridgestone will provide complete coverage for Poland and Norway in terms of fleet service and assistance thanks to the integration of new dealers.

But not just anyone can become a Truck Point dealer. Certain criteria must be met as regards to quality of service, the ability to offer 24hr breakdown assistance, to provide a fleet

maintenance service and not forgetting the willingness to support and promote the brand name when dealing with large haulage companies. Rafal Spirydon, TBR Product Manager at Bridgestone Poland said: "We also take into account factors such as the part played by Bridgestone and Firestone tyres within the dealer's stock, his development over the last three years and even the potential as regards new and retread tyres". Kristian Aslaksrud, TBR Product Manager at Bridgestone Norway, believes that "we should also add reputation in the market, a convenient geographical location and professionalism". The role of Bridgestone Europe when choosing Truck Point dealers is to define and supply the subsidiaries with a package of clear directives describing the ideal profile of the dealer and the desired methodology in terms of management. These directives are contained in a manual handed out to all the subsidiaries. The ultimate aim is to maintain or enhance the quality of service. On the level of products, Bridgestone Europe wishes to adopt an attitude based on client expectations and therefore to provide the product best suited to the conditions of use.



Kristian Aslaksrud,
Key Account
Manager TBR
Norway.



Rafal Spirydon,
TBR Product
Manager
Bridgestone Poland.



A leading Truck Point dealer at Oslo.

Truck Point in Poland

- 30 TPs in 2004 (+ 30 over 5 years)
- 50% of TPs offer a mobile service and 25% a 24hr service
- Harmonised prices on a national level
- Tyre monitoring
- All the Bridgestone range is offered

Poland has 300 km of motorway, fleets of mainly 1 to 10 vehicles, a few large haulage companies operating with over 150 vehicles, 1 fleet of 650 vehicles and a rapid growth in specialised transportation (tankers). Poland will join the EU in May 2004.

Truck Point in Norway

- 50 TPs by the end of 2004 (+10 over 5 years)
- All the TPs offer a 24hr breakdown service and have a repair vehicle
- Varied selection in stock
- Complete tyre service
- All the Bridgestone/Firestone range is on offer

Norway has a total pool of 50,000 trucks and 8,000 buses, fleets of essentially 1 to 10 vehicles, five large haulage companies operating with more than 100 vehicles and some large fleets of buses such as Connex and Netbuss.

A four-pronged network policy

- Expansion in Norway, Poland and Hungary.
- Constant improvement in the dealer's level of service.
- Creating and/or reinforcing awareness of the network among the fleets with the emphasis on visibility and past history
- Developing the retread programme and fleet programme in order to promote the growth of the network. The three programmes (Truck Point, Retread and Fleet) must be expanded together in order to guarantee the best possible co-ordinated approach for fleet clients.

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A3 breakdown Service (Germany) Anywhere, any time

If there is an emergency, he will be there. Tyres may play an even more important role in his job than in that of his namesake, but the only other thing Markus Schumacher has in common with the famous Michael is his red overalls. "No sign of those millions in my account yet," grins the man from the A3 tyre-change service in Ratingen.

A3 Reifen Auto Service is a subsidiary of Bridgestone Deutschland GmbH and part of the Europe-wide Bridgestone breakdown assistance "Service Europe" network. "All 36 branches are independent businesses, and only those which meet our strictest criteria become Truck Point members," explains Andreas Hövel, Bridgestone regional manager trucks west.



If there is an emergency, he will be there...

guard, for instance if the vehicle is very close to the edge of the motorway.

Safety first

When a breakdown report comes in at Service Europe, it is forwarded to the nearest Truck Point dealer. One of the rescue team is Markus Schumacher. He's ready to go out on a call - day or night. In order to travel out to assist with trucks with problems, he drives a specially equipped breakdown vehicle, a 7.5 tonne Mercedes Atego 815. It has a hydraulic jack which can raise up to 60 tonnes, various impact spanners with a compressor, a fitting machine and even a balancing machine, sparing drivers the need to also visit a workshop. From 15 years of experience, he knows that, although time is the key factor, safety comes first. Before Markus Schumacher sets out, he phones the driver to check on the exact tyre size, and takes two of the relevant type with him to the scene of the breakdown. Where the tyre is a twin, he usually changes both tyres. He sometimes also asks the police to help as an extra safe-

During his shift, he's out on the roads an average of once or twice a night, and even more often during the day. "It was especially bad last summer," says 'Schumi' as his colleagues call him. "Tyres are particularly badly affected by the extreme heat." He decides on the spot what needs to be done. The truck's spare tyre rarely needs to be used. "Drivers often don't have one, in order to free up more payload. Mounting a new tyre takes just 20 minutes, but it's more like three-quarters of an hour if you're using the spare tyre." If it's only a semi-trailer tyre that has been damaged, Schumacher often doesn't remove the actual wheel at all. "You can take off the tyre and mount the new one with tyre levers - just like with a bicycle," he assures us. The call-out area of Schumacher's breakdown service has a radius of 100 km around Ratingen. Markus Schumacher is out at the scene of the breakdown with his vehicle one to one-and-a-half hour



A3 is a part of the Europe-wide Bridgestone breakdown assistance "Service Europe" network.

at the latest after the emergency call has reached him.

The A3 tyre-change service in Ratingen has an amply supplied stock which includes mainly of Bridgestone and Firestone tyres and every imaginable type of tyre, plus wheels. As Andreas Hövel stresses, "Its particularly high-quality facilities, large stock and superbly well-equipped breakdown vehicle make the Ratingen branch a real model business."

IN BRIEF

© Bridgestone Tyres are to be fitted to all Airbus models, from the A318 to the Super Jumbo A380. Bridgestone is to develop a new range of tyres for the latter family, as it did for the A340-500 and A340-600 models.

Bridgestone has supplied Airbus with tyres since 1982, but the agreement recently reached between the two companies will further strengthen Bridgestone's position within this specialised market. A highly demanding market over which only a handful of manufacturers can claim to hold sway. Bridgestone's market share within this niche area is around 33%.

© 2.78 litres per 100km. This is the average fuel consumption for a VW Lupo 3L TDI fitted with Bridgestone's Ecopia, low rolling resistance tyres. This performance was achieved during a trip round Europe by an Austrian journalist (Gerhard Plattner). He crossed 20 countries and travelled 4,683 km at an average speed of 80.76 km/h with a fuel budget of 100 euros of



which he only spent 90.94. Bridgestone tyres contributed to this performance as G. Plattner confirmed: "The tyres behaved very well under all weather conditions".

© Bridgestone Europe (BSEU) has established its general headquarters in new, more spacious, buildings, located at Zaventem, barely 2 km from its old premises. Operational since the beginning of this year, BSEU's HQ, known as "Angle View", covers a



floor area of 6,300 m² with the option of an additional 1,200 m². This space is needed due to the increase in personnel and to accommodate more clients and visitors.

© The 2004 Formula 1 season again promises to be an exciting one and Bridgestone should once more play the lead role. After last year's exploits by Ferrari which is fitted with Bridgestone tyres, the competition is wide open and will be hosting two new Grand Prix, in Bahrain and China. One thing is certain, after numerous tests carried out between seasons, Bridgestone is ready and waiting to take up new challenges with the following teams: Ferrari, Sauber, Jordan and Minardi

© Launched in 2003, an initial awareness campaign aimed at highlighting the coverage and quality of Bridgestone's Truck Point network was supported by very encouraging results: the traffic at the Bridgestone Europe site (www.bridgestone-eu.com) has doubled since September 2003 (On the webpages dedicated to the Truck Point network - www.truckpoint-eu.com -, this traffic is reported to have actually increased tenfold!), contacts with new fleets that expressed an interest in the Truck Point network have increased as a result of the media campaign and the campaign covered in the Real Answers magazine which is aimed at European fleet operators. The campaign will continue in 2004 campaign and will not only cover Bridgestone's main 6 European markets but also the other European countries where the Truck Point network is also operating.

GMD Service Europe The network is ready

Full production of the Greatec Mega Drive (GMD) fitted Actros began at the start of 2004 so being able to count on a GMD tyre breakdown service across Europe is of prime importance. The Truck Point network has it covered.

The success of a concept like GMD strongly depends on the quality of the service with which it is associated. This is why Bridgestone has selected a number of Truck Point dealers across Europe to become approved Bridgestone Greatec and Aircept service points. In the event of a problem with a truck fitted with Greatec tyres, these Truck Point dealers will operate like a traditional inter-



Over 250 GMD Approved Truck Point dealers provide breakdown service across Western Europe for Mercedes Benz Actros trucks fitted with Greatec Mega Drive tyres.

national assistance network. In the unlikely event of a puncture on the GMD tyre, all the driver needs to do is to contact the Service Europe call centre, which will then take over organising a rescue. The aim is to reach the breakdown site within 2 hours on the main routes in Western Europe. To achieve this, over 250 Truck Point dealers (a number set to increase) have been specially trained and equipped in servicing GMD breakdowns.

We've got it covered

Hauliers who opt for a Mercedes truck fitted with the GMD tyre will receive a membership card automatically entitling them to benefit from the advantages of Service Europe. The HGV purchaser will also find Bridgestone literature on board the truck describing the Greatec Mega Drive / Aircept concept and the Service Europe breakdown system (including the prices and call centre number).

There are also instructions and tools for basic maintenance of the Greatec Mega Drive tyre. Due to the effectiveness and efficiency of the Aircept safety system, the driver may not feel if there is a problem with the tyre. Therefore a colour

coded warning system has been integrated in to the dashboard of the truck. Depending on the seriousness of the situation, one of three warnings will appear: A yellow warning means that the tyre pressure is below normal and the GMD / Aircept system should be checked. If the warning light is red it means that the pressure is much too low and the tyre should be checked as soon as possible. If the warning is red and a buzzer is sounding, the tyre is flat and Aircept has been activated. In this case, the driver must reduce his speed to 60 km/h and stop as soon as it is safe to do so (within 25 km). He can then call Service Europe, who will immediately send out a GMD approved breakdown mechanic from the Truck Point network to replace the tyre and Aircept.

This efficient GMD Breakdown service network quells any worries an operator may have about driving without a spare tyre, and is a testament to the professional and far reaching Truck Point Network

Jensen Däck (Sweden)

Jensen doesn't keep his customers waiting

Efficient service and good customer liaison are the watchwords of Bridgestone dealer Jensen Däck of Helsingborg AB. Founder and owner Erling Jensen knows most of the firm's 600 or so business customers personally. And if he doesn't, then one of his six employees does.



Two service vehicles attend to pressing customer needs.

Personal contact is equally important when it comes to Jensen's own customer relationship with tyre manufacturers and this was why, three years ago, he switched to Bridgestone as his main brand.

"Another competitor was competing with us through his own local tyre firm. We were relegated to second place and given less favourable terms," Erling reports.

So it made sense to end collaboration with them and instead expand and develop business with Bridgestone and joined the Truck Point Network. "Switching to Bridgestone is a wise decision as they are good to work with and their products are just as good, if not better," says Erling.

"First-class brand"

As often, the customers followed their dealer's recommendations and within a year most had starting using Bridgestone. Confidence in the dealer leads to confidence in his brand. "Our responsibility to our customers is to represent a really first-class and quality brand like Bridgestone," Erling emphasises.

"Another wise decision is to join the Truck Point network where I get additional business from the pan-European accounts that Bridgestone generates. I will also be able to provide a pan-European breakdown service to my customers via Service Europe," Erling said.

The firm celebrated their 20th anniversary last autumn and more than 350 invited guests turned out for the event, when only 250 had been expected.



Erling Jensen owes his success to knowledge of the industry and hard graft.

Business customers with both commercial vehicles and cars account for 75% of Jensen's turnover of almost SEK 15 million per year – and growing. The remainder is accounted for by private car-owners.

Erling Jensen has a strong market share in the Helsingborg region and hence sees good growth potential for the firm's Malmö branch, Mega-Däck, established two years ago and operated by two employees.

"We need to cultivate this for the future," he says.

Heavy vehicles account for most of the firm's turnover, and business customers are the main focus of Jensen's active customer liaison efforts.

"We contact them to remind them that it's time to replace their tyres and communicate on new developments which will be of benefit to them. We also listen carefully to their needs," Erling says. "We worked closely with Bridgestone where we do joint visits to our customers. We find this to be a successful tool to get additional business."

However, Erling does not undertake any proactive marketing to personal customers. Most of them come in twice a year to have their tyres changed to winter or summer tyres.

"The best marketing we can do is to give them good and quick service. We do not keep our customers waiting," says Jensen. "Why do we have to wait when you can do it immediately?" he wonders.

As part of Erling's active customer care, as the boss, he is not tucked away in the office, but out in the workshop – or rather, workshops, because they have two bays for heavy vehicles and two for cars, surrounded by separate storage areas for new tyres and customers' used tyres.


Large, heavy truck and machine tyres are stored at ground level and car tyres are stored on a purpose-built platform. There is a forklift truck for heavy and high lifting. The storage area is continuously expanding to meet demand as the business grows.

Business customers who do not have time to visit the workshop in Ättekulla by the exit for Malmö can instead have a visit from one of the two service vehicles that are out and about 4-5 hours each day, taking care of customers' pressing needs.

"Business customers lose money when their vehicles are lying idle. But for planned service and regular tyre changes, we book time in the workshop," Erling concludes.




NEWS

 A tyre dealer with 25 years' experience in the Worcestershire area has been appointed to the Truck Point dealer network. Dawson



Tyre Services Ltd., run by Colin Dawson, is to look after all Truck Point's needs in the Redditch area. The company has three Mercedes Sprinter vans and a Ford Transit fitted out with the latest equipment.

 Breakdown service extended to include GMD/Aircept in Germany. During the first weeks of 2004, the first vehicles in the new Actros series featuring Bridgestone's GMD/AIRCEPT technology have been delivered. The high tech tractor's twin tyres (size 315/70 R 22.5) may optionally be replaced by single 495/45 R 22.5 tyres. To ensure that rapid assistance can be provided in the event of a flat tyre, Bridgestone is training selected Truck Point dealers, so that new tyres can be fitted on all main roads in Germany within 24 hours. All Truck Point dealers will receive GMD/Aircept training.




Patrick Puskailer, commercial vehicles technician at Bridgestone Deutschland, puts breakdown assistance operators in the picture.

 On 11 December 2003, Bridgestone Benelux organised a meeting for 45 independent Truck Point members.

That day saw the rebirth of the Truck Point network in Belgium. All the members are enthusiastic and dedicated professional tyre specialists. Truck Point provides a guarantee of the quality in tyres and services now demanded by the constantly changing transport landscape. Bridgestone Benelux is taking up this challenge together with the 45 Truck Point members, not only in Belgium and Luxembourg, but also as part of the Pan-European Truck Point network.

The meeting on 11 December demonstrated that everyone is ready to take up the gauntlet and further develop Truck Point to form a dynamic entity. Everyone shows the zeal needed to make Truck Point, in conjunction with Bridgestone, a success. Truck Point is ready for this in Belgium and Luxembourg too!

 The first working group meeting for the Austria's Truck Point Premium members was held in January 2004. The target is to work out proposals to increase common business and truck tyre service. The concept of Service Europe was also discussed. The expectations from the Truck Point partners were discussed on the following points:

- to improve quality of service including breakdown service for existing fleet customers
- improve working relationship between the Truck Point partners
- how to improve sales and fleet targeting
- work out a recommended service price
- set up a good communication flow from Bridgestone to Truck Point partners
- advertising and promotional activities



(from l. to r.) Tassilo Rodlauer, TBR Sales Manager BSAU Mag.; Stefan Deschka, Managing Director Wanggo Reifen - Top Reifen Team; Johann Wolf, Area and Shop Manager (Reifen John); Franz Klug, Shop Manager (Reifen Weichberger - Top Reifen Team); Josef Liebenberger, Area and Shop Manager (Reifen Team Varga & Obemüller - POINT S).



What's new in HGVs? Awaiting 2004...

2003 will not be remembered for spectacular innovations in terms of Heavy Goods Vehicles. Although this doesn't mean that it was a lean year. Awaiting 2004, some manufacturers have « made do » with looking after their existing market. Others have beefed it up a little.

Among the most striking developments in 2003 was the launch of the **Volvo** FH16, the Swedish manufacturer's top-of-the-range model (16 engine, 550 or 610hp), successor of the F16 which had been taken off the market. In addition to the FH16, **Volvo** is also offering a 460hp FM12. The other Scandinavian manufacturer, **Scania**, decided to market its eXc concept under the name of LongLine, a particularly roomy cab destined for the highly prized (but smaller) luxury cab market. It is only available with the 580hp V8 engine. **MAN** continues to phase out its TGA with the appearance of its light TS tractor essentially suited to tanker transportation. The German manufacturer introduced also a 660hp 4-axle vehicle specially designed for exceptional transportation and a luxury cab with its Sstar model. For its part, **Iveco** has introduced two new ranges to the Stralis family: the Stralis Active Time (for medium distances) and the Active Day (for city and intercity use). The Italian manufacturer is also offering a completely new series of Eurocargos, aimed chiefly at the distribution market. For **DAF**, 2003 has been the year of the multi-axle vehicles with the launch of new versions in the CF and XF ranges (6x4, 8x2 and 8x4). **Mercedes-Benz** has introduced the new 18 to 41t 320 to 580hp Actros site range. Let's remember also that this truck can be fitted with newly developed Greatec MegaDrive tyres that are exclusively available through

Bridgestone **Renault Trucks** ended the year with the Premium Lander. This is a site vehicle, equally at home on tarmac and mud (270 to 420hp), coming between the Premium and the Kerax.



The Scania LongLine.

2004 promises to be livelier with the long-awaited arrival of the successor to Scania's 4 Series, a new generation of relifted Ategos from Mercedes-Benz and a new show-stopper, the Renault Magnum. Iveco may even be bringing out a new EuroTrakker (construction site) and MAN the successor to the L2000 (distribution).



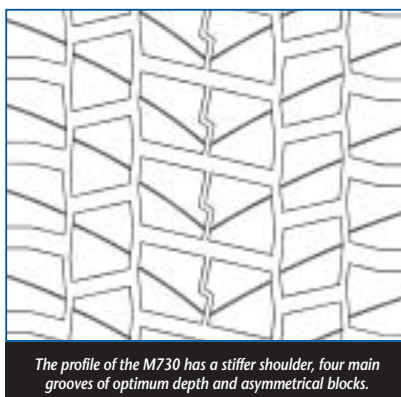
TBR M730 Tyre Reduce the effects of retarder

The Bridgestone range is enhanced by a new product: the TBR M730, a tyre specially designed for vehicles fitted with a retarder. Trucks fitted with retarder exerts a higher impact on tyre wear when braking.

The development of braking systems for heavy goods vehicles usually goes hand in hand with a different type of tyre wear pattern. Tyre manufacturers must therefore adapt their range to meet the new demands imposed by these technological developments. This is the case with the retarder since its action directly influences the tyre's wear. With a standard tyre, the blocks have a "serrated" wear pattern. This problem has now been solved with the new M730 designed for the driving-axes of tractors and large tankers. This tyre is derived from the M729, Bridgestone's long-distance and local tyre.

Stiffer shoulders

Compared to the M729, which is still the flagship product of the range, the M730 has asymmetrical blocks and four main grooves of optimum depth. Moreover, the rubber bridges on the shoulders (the part subjected to the most stress when a decelerator is used) have been raised and stiffened. In terms of performance, the M729 and M730 are very similar except that the latter reduces irregular serrated wear. The improvement on this point is in the order of 40% between the two tyres in favour of the M730 (see drawing). Moreover, whereas conventional tyres require premature removal due to serrated wear, the M730 has proved to be longer lasting.



The profile of the M730 has a stiffer shoulder, four main grooves of optimum depth and asymmetrical blocks.

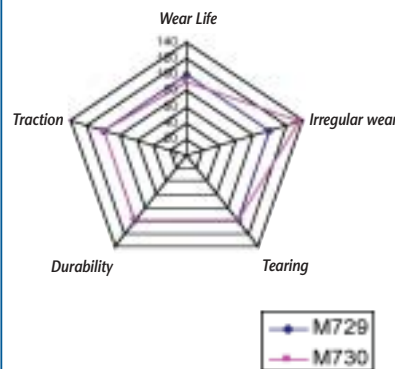
This premature removal explains the slight difference of 10% between the two profiles shown in the drawing under the tyre's Wear Life Cycle. If this difference is in favour of the M729, it is because the value shown is a theoretical one. In fact, the theoretical mileage is rarely reached without removing the tyre. By contrast, the value given for the M730 reflects the true position.

As from February, the M730 will be available in sizes 295/80R22.5 and 315/80R22.5 whilst the 315/70R22 will be launched in April.

But Bridgestone aims to go yet further by developing a new concept integrating both profiles: M729 and M730.

This tyre will be launched in 2005.

Performance. Comparison between the M729 and the M730.



The answer is in the name

From now on, for the next editions of Truck Point Mail you can find a brief description of the different technological concepts applied by Bridgestone to its heavy range.



R-Bead

Definition/Function:

The R-Bead, utilising different rubber compounds in the form of the letter R, ensures preservation of the rigidity of the bead while maintaining the flexibility of the sidewall.

Advantages:

The bead to sidewall joint displays less fatigue.

Application:

R166 Mega volume.



Waved Belt

Definition/Function:

The Waved Belt restricts deformation of the casing during use so limiting the risk of uneven wear.

Advantages:

As a result of the reduction in uneven wear, the lifetime of the tyre is increased. The reduction in deformation also enhances fuel economy and therefore lowers the cost per mile/kilometre.

Applications:

R227-M729 (Series 45-60), R166 Mega volume.



Dual Sipe

Definition/Function:

With its twin width grooving, the Dual Sipe reduces the retention of stones in the treads and encourages their ejection. Its wide sipe structure is also responsible for improved performance in wet or winter conditions.

Advantages:

Improves the life of the casing through stone ejection and increases wet/winter performance of the tyre.

Applications:

M788, R297.