

Foreword

Over the past 100 years the European Automotive Industry has been repeatedly challenged by best practice. First by the United States, through the development of ‘mass production’ pioneered by Henry Ford and more recently by ‘lean production techniques’ as practised by the leading Japanese producers, particularly Toyota. It has consistently risen to these challenges and has shown it can compete and even outperform its competitors with world-class products. However, the European industry is now faced with growing competition and growth from new emerging low-cost countries and needs to re-define its competitive advantage to remain at the forefront of the sector. Automotive growth is driven by two factors, new markets and new technologies. Global competition is increasing, with technology and product differentiation becoming the most important sales factors, but with continued cost pressure. Within the market the winners will be more profitable and the losers will disappear.

The Automotive Industry makes a significant contribution to the socio-economic fabric of the European Union. Manufacturing output represents €700 billion and research and development spending €24 billion. European automotive suppliers number 5000 member companies and represent 5 million employees and generate €500 billion in revenues. These are significant figures that generate wealth and high value employment within the EU. European firms must consistently improve their competitive position to ensure that the industry does not migrate to growing new markets.

‘Build To Order: The Road to the 5-Day Car’ provides us with a vision for a sustainable future European Automotive Industry that is able to meet these challenges and win. Within this book Dr Parry and Professor Graves have been able to integrate the ideas and concepts from the key automotive centres of excellence across Europe. This provides both the technical depth and breadth required, giving a structured approach to Build to Order, from the view point of the market, product, supply chain and most important, delivering a vehicle that “the customer wants when they want it”.

The challenge, set out in ‘Build To Order: The Road to the 5-Day Car’, is the transformation of the automotive industry in Europe from mass manufacturer to build to order. The opportunity is currently there, but needs to be acted upon quickly and before new entrants adopt these concepts. This book provides an essential guide to those in the automotive industry taking up the challenge.

Lars Holmqvist
CEO CLEPA
European Association of Automotive Suppliers

Build To Order

The Road to the 5-Day Car

Parry, G.; Graves, A.P. (Eds.)

2008, XX, 438 p., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-1-84800-224-1