



Master Power says maintaining good relationships with customers is paramount to its success.

# MASTER POWER CATERS TO CLASSIC CAR ENTHUSIASTS

BY FERNIE GRACE TIFLIS

**M**ovies like the "Dukes of Hazzard" and "Fast and the Furious" suggest cars have become more than a means of transportation. They are now a passion – and in many circles – an obsession. Behind the scenes of these amazing automobiles resides the specialty automotive equipment industry. Growing at an annual rate of roughly 7 percent, the market produces nearly \$11 billion in goods.

"There has been a tremendous amount of demand in the industry from enthusiasts and non enthusiasts alike," notes Westy Ballard, CEO of Master Power Brakes LLC.

Master Power, a leading supplier of brake and suspension systems for the automotive aftermarket that include street rods, muscle cars and trucks, says it responds to the enormous demand by continuing to provide the best-quality products and the best technical support in the market.

"We will not compromise our

quality to save a buck," Ballard states. "When dealing with the most critical safety component on automobiles, we strive to supply the best products on the market. You truly do get what you pay for in this industry."

Master Power's heritage is in supplying brake kits to enthusiasts with vehicles produced in years ranging from the 1920s to the 1970s. Ballard says the company will continue to supply world-class brake systems to enthusiasts, but plans to leverage its more than 20-year history and expertise to extend its product line into later model vehicles and suspension kits, along with other synergistic applications to benefit its customers.

Since Master Power supplies complete do-it-yourself brake and suspension systems or kits, the company believes maintaining a relationship with its customers is paramount to continued success. Ballard explains that Master Power is not a traditional manufacturer. "We talk to our customers prior to conducting R&D," he says. "We've always believed that the only way to stay focused is to stay in touch with what's important – that means listening to the needs of our customers."

Focusing on sourcing best-of-breed components from top sup-

## PROFILE

Master Power Brakes LLC

[www.mpbrakes.com](http://www.mpbrakes.com)

HQ: Mooresville, N.C.

Products: Brake and suspension systems

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pliers, Master Power conducts final assembly and quality assurance testing in its approximately 20,000-square-foot facility.

"We are very particular about our quality assurance," Ballard adds. "We recognize that our name is on the line each time we ship so we want to ensure the best for our customers."

In the fall, Master Power is introducing larger rotor kits, high-performance systems and suspension kits for most vehicle models.

#### SEEING DIFFERENT LENSES

One challenge the company faces, Ballard notes, is the competition with less experienced and "fly-by-night" companies. "Some [businesses] utilize inferior products," Ballard says. "There are a lot of companies who utilize parts that are suspect in reliability. Furthermore, these competitors lack the technology or expertise to successfully and safely help the customer."

Additionally, Master Power says all of its products are carefully engineered. "We will not sell [customers] a box of parts that may or may not fit [their] car and may or may not work together properly," the company emphasizes. "We believe that a classic car deserves something better than salvage yard brake parts and something safer than the old fashioned brakes it came with."

Master Power, compared to other companies, sells quality. "We

continue to have the most talented people on staff to support the customer," Ballard adds.

"Our employees go through a fairly rigorous training and indoctrination before landing in their full-time position. We ensure they are exposed to the entire manufacturing and production processes to ensure they see the [operation] through different lenses."

#### WORKING WITH PEOPLE

After serving as an officer in the U.S. Marines for nearly five years, and as a former senior manager at a NASDAQ-listed company, Ballard acquired Master Power in 2004. He says he has always been an automotive enthusiast and was familiar with the company. "I acquired the company for numerous reasons," Ballard explains. "This is a company that put quality first, had a tremendous brand name and was serving enthusiasts around the globe. We enjoy working with people and we want to achieve what they want to achieve. We're here for them, and not the other way around."

Ballard says Master Power will continue to focus on organic growth initiatives, but will also look to acquire additional companies that are synergistic and accretive to its growth plan. **MT**