

Increasing Wheels India's Share of Business With International Tractors Ltd

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Abstract- This paper is a summary of the learning experience during the 45 day internship period in Wheels India Ltd, a giant in the automobile Wheel and Agricultural Wheel manufacturing business. It was a project-based internship that was to ascertain the reason why this company had very insignificant business affairs with the International Tractors Ltd. (ITL) or Sonalika Tractors- the major Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) in the tractor business in India. Despite dominating the business, Wheels India has its market share in the business with ITL, which was very low when compared with the competitors. This assignment was to analyse this situation, determine underlying causes and recommend feasible strategies that can be used to improve cooperation and market. When doing the project, the following were involved; factory visits, assessing the prices and logistical processes, group meetings, and direct observation of processes involved. The internship was not only a way to advance academic knowledge but it also allowed to better comprehend the B2B strategy, work with clients, and industrial marketing.

Keywords- Wheels India Ltd., International Tractors Ltd. (Sonalika), OEM, B2B Strategy, Market Expansion

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About Wheels India Ltd.

Wheels India Ltd. (WIL) was founded in **1960** and is a subsidiary of the **TSF Group** (earlier a part of the TVS Group), manufacturing automotive components in India, and now numbered among the top players in the field. The company features a wide range of products that encompasses steel wheel, forged wheel, air suspension and fabricated structure to both the domestic and foreign market. WIL also has its manufacturing plants across the states of Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh and other prominent industrial areas and therefore caters to a large variety of industries including passenger vehicle, commercial vehicle, agricultural tractor and construction equipment. It has among its customers major OEMs such as **Mahindra, TAFE, Tata motors, and Ashok Leyland** among others. The engineering skills, the quality of product development and product delivery on the

stipulated time is the secret behind the reputation of wheels India which is backed by international endorsement like **ISO 9001 & TS 16949**. By its constant innovation, good relationships with its clients, and its increased export presence, WIL has established itself as a reliable and a strategic position as a global supply chain partner in the global auto component supply chain.

1.2 Company Vision and Mission

Vision:

To become a world-class organization with a strong global presence.

Mission:

- To be the preferred supplier to customers by offering value to all stakeholders.
- To become an international player by focusing on core areas of strength.
- To develop new businesses using existing and emerging competencies.
- To continuously improve people, processes, and products.

II. ABOUT THE INTERNSHIP

Due to being the second year MBA student, specializing in Marketing and Logistics, I got a chance to go on my summer internship to Wheels India Ltd., under the supervision of **Mr. Magesh V.** in the **Sales and Marketing Department**. My internship focus was on live project entitled: Investment DecisionPromotion as to increasing the Business of Wheels India with International Tractors Ltd. Despite being a known market leader in the tractor wheel segment, the level of Wheels India business relationship with the Indian tractor major, International Tractors Ltd. (ITL), a major OEM in the scenery of tractor market in India, was surprising. This was a huge loss of growth prospect. My task was to examine possible reasons underlying this small share of business and to come up with practical and data-supported approaches that

would allow the company to cement its place and establish a long-term relation with ITL.

III. INTERNSHIP OBJECTIVES

The learning objectives which were established at the beginning of the internship were:

- Having the hands-on experience in B2B marketing in the manufacturing setting.
- Gaining a basic knowledge of how pricing, logistics and quality play a role in powering the vendor selection by large OEMs.
- Coming up with strategic thinking that is based on competitive benchmarking and analysis of issues.
- Improving the competency in the data collection, running of a factory and client profiling. Cross-training and developing new business and cross-functional communication skills.

IV. COMPANY PROFILE SUMMARY

Attribute	Details
Year of Establishment	1960
Parent Organization	TSF Group (formerly TVS Group)
Headquarters	Chennai, Tamil Nadu
Core Products	Steel & alloy wheels, suspension systems, fabrications
Market Presence	India, USA, Europe, Asia
Key Clients	Tata Motors, Mahindra, TAFE, Escorts, Ashok Leyland
Tractor Wheel Market Share	~54% in India

Wheels India is known for its high-quality products, strong R&D support, ISO certifications, and long-term partnerships with reputed OEMs.

V. ACTIVITIES UNDERTAKEN

5.1 Departmental Allocation

During my internship, I was at OEM Sales & Marketing section, as per the tractor line. This team will be dealing with the most crucial customer relations with big scale Original Equipment Manufacturers (OEM) like Mahindra,

TAFE and International Tractors Ltd. (ITL). Some of the tasks involved in the scope of work were dealing with incoming clientele, tracking of the orders, pricing strategy development, and after sales services coordination. The experience gave me the firsthand exposure in how strategic sales functions are carried out in a B2B industrial setting.

5.2 Key Responsibilities

During the internship I was kept in my toes through a variety of activities, all pointing towards the larger picture of devising methods through which Wheels India would gain an even greater proportion of the business with ITL. My main duties:

- **Client Research:** Did a thorough study of International Tractors Ltd., its background, the range of tractors the company sells, their market positioning, and the suppliers present with them.
- **Data Analysis:** Looked at the past data of whether Wheels India has ever worked with ITL in the past so as to find out other aspects like the amount of orders, competitiveness in terms of price, the delivery schedule and the quality stability of the work.
- **Plant Visit:** Visited at Padi manufacturing plant to view the entire process of wheel making. This was to entail, among many things, material handling, fabrication, quality check and packaging standard.
- **Competitor Benchmarking:** Conducted a comparative study between Wheels India Ltd and its arch rival Steel Strips Wheels Ltd. (SSWL), who is also closest rival in terms of pricing structure, geographical opportunity, service level and deep relationship with ITL.
- **Cost Structure Review:** Worked with the Costing and the Logistics unit to discuss ways in which the costs of freights and operations could be cut down to offer a more competitive pricing structure.
- **Strategic Presentation:** Presented all research findings, analyses, solutions proposed by me in a well-organized presentation, and then presented this presentation to senior management team that could review and make strategic decisions on business presentation.

VI. KEY FINDINGS

6.1 Opportunity Size

International Tractors Ltd. (ITL) which has a popular brand called Sonalika is one of the leading tractor manufacturers in India. ITL has a lead in both local and

foreign market with a yearly production of more than 100, 000 tractors. Every single tractor needs four wheels two at the front and two at the back, which means that ITL alone needs approximately 400.000 wheels every year. This number draws to attention a large volume of procurement, which will offer a lucrative and expandable opportunity to component makers like Wheels India Ltd. The possibility of supplying to ITL in high volumes is also strategically important, given the focus of WIL is on high quality tractor wheels and the fact that it has already leadership position in the Indian market. Nonetheless, Wheels India even with its technical capacity and market credibility serves to less than 5 per cent of the total requirement of ITL in wheels. It is involved mainly in trial orders or in smaller orders, but there are no long-term/volume based agreements. Such underutilization indicates they are missing on a strategic opportunity, particularly in comparison with the competitors that are now getting the preferred status as suppliers to ITL. Growing the percentage of this demand that is satisfied by WIL will be important because it may produce a significant increase in revenue and production efficiencies as a result of economies of scale and a more robust presence in the tractors market in the north of India, where ITL is more active. This opportunity is hence both commercially favorable and necessary in terms of ensuring long-term growth and diversification strategy of WIL business within the field of agricultural OEMs.

6.2 Identified Barriers

Barrier	Details
Pricing	WIL's prices were marginally higher than competitors due to higher freight costs.
Logistics	The nearest WIL plant (Rampur) is not optimally located compared to SSWL's proximity to ITL's Punjab plant.
Relationship	SSWL has been a long-term, trusted partner of ITL with consistent performance.
Awareness	ITL was not fully aware of WIL's latest technical capabilities or capacity.

6.3 Strengths of WIL

Although Wheels India Ltd. (WIL) holds a small share of business with International Tractors Ltd. (ITL), the company also has a number of intrinsic strengths that make it a very strong and qualified supplier in the business of tractor wheel.

- **Clients with Established Portfolio:** WIL has a solid experience of successful and longstanding relations with the most popular tractor manufacturers like Mahindra, TAFE, and Escorts. These partnerships denote the company as a company capable of satisfying the strict requirements of the leading OEMs and can be considered as a powerful reference point during the interaction with new customers such as ITL.
- **Higher Product Quality and Dependability:** Wheels India has an exceptional record in high-quality wheels that are very reliable in terms of quality, precision and structural stability. The fact that its products have been performing systematically even in different conditions in the agricultural fields has been a significant requirement in the tractor industry.
- **Certified Manufacturing Excellence:** The production premises of the company are certified under the world-known standards, including ISO 9001:2015 and IATF 16949, which confirm the efficiency of the quality management system and adherence to global automotive standards.
- **High R&D and customization ability:** WIL has a high level of investment in research and development so that, it can co-create a customised solution of wheel with OEMs. This allows the company to respond rapidly to the changing market demands, assist new model introduction, and provide value-added technical solutions.⁷ Strategic Recommendations

Based on the findings from the internship and analysis of current gaps, the following strategic recommendations were proposed to enhance Wheels India Ltd.'s (WIL) share of business with International Tractors Ltd. (ITL). These recommendations are designed to address existing challenges while building a sustainable and value-driven relationship with the client.

VII. STRATEGIC RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Cost leadership

- **Pricing Structure Reformulation of ITL:** WIL may approach pricing reconfiguration of ITL by subsidizing either freight costs or providing offering discounts in the initial stages of dealings or creating special pricing packages that eliminate the marginal price difference upon comparison with existing suppliers.

- **Volume-Based Incentive Programs:** In order to encourage ITL to order larger volumes of the items, introduce volume-based discounts or introduce some incentive-based scheme depending on the performance it records, but framed in mutually acceptable parameters. This produces win-win situation on the cost as well as business development.

7.2 Better Proximity to Logistics

- **Set up Consignment Stock or Regional Depot:** Consignment stock point or setting up a regional warehouse near the manufacturing plant of ITL in Punjab would also drastically cut down the lead times, flexibility of deliveries, and eases the response by the WIL to emergency needs.
- **Engage with Third-Party Logistics (3PL) Providers:** Joining hands with a trusted 3PL company to store and transport the products would enable efficient logistics making the sequence lean and reducing the costs of transportation and storage, thereby granting the firm strong power to serve ITL with a reduced turnaround time.

7.3 Enhanced technical participation

- **Co-Development of wheels:** Take an initiative to jointly work on R&D with the ITL technical department to co-develop or customize the wheel to match the new models of tractors and particularly with export destination and/or with premium segments. This would also increase product fit and show that WIL is willing to have long-term cooperation.
- **Technical Supported Samples Infection:** Provide technical support of sample infections, including pilot batches, or product trials with engineering documentation and performance certification and on site support to enable ITL to analyze the value of switching to WIL products.

7.4 Building a Relationship

- **Promote Knowledge Exchange Visits:** Arrange plant visits, quality audits, product demonstrations with the procurement, R&D and quality assurance teams of ITL. This will create a level of transparency, develop the technical confidence and demonstrate manufacturing process of WIL.
- **Bring out Historic One-Off Accomplishments:** as a case study, bring out long-term association success with OEMs such as Mahindra, TAFE and Escorts to

fortify WIL brand as an industry and performance powerhouse supplier.

7.5 Target marketing and branding

- **ITL-specific Marketing Collateral:** Design a technical brochure/proposal customized to ITL that profiles WIL around its quality certifications (ISO, IATF), awards, design innovations, and delivery performance. Such a specific attention in branding can be more satisfying to the procurement requirements of ITL.
- **Strategic Trade Events attendance:** Be sure to be present in strategic trade events like the agricultural expos, automotive trade expos and other related quick spots where the leaders of ITL and its suppliers can be found. These interactions are possible to maintain open visibility, network, and make informal relationship building.

VIII. SKILLS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

8.1 Technical competences

- Knowledge of costing in manufacturing and the price of components.
- Simple use of SAP Sales and distributions module.
- Business analysis and presentations using excel and power point.
- Understandings of tractor wheels dimensions and testing.

8.2 Soft Skills

- Interdepartmental team organization (Sales, Logistic, R&D, costing).
- Business good manners and etiquette.
- Dead line time management.
- Customer-preference based and operationally constrained decision-making.

IX. REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUSION

This internship was an eye-opening experience, as it was a key event of my academic and professional life. It was not only an exposure to the industry, it was the entire experience into the working of large B2B companies, including how the strategic decisions are made. The real-time experience that I did in working on this project allowed me to put in practice the theoretical information that I managed to get on pricing, logistics, and industrial marketing.

What was more important, here I found out that client relations in B2B cases are not dependent on price but rely on trust, quality of services, speed, and similarities of technologies. My encounters with various teams and visit to the locations made me greater understand cross-functional work and the necessity of customer orientation.

I continued my commitment to the business strategy and operations and gained readiness to work in any position involving supply chain management, sales strategy or consulting in future because of the project. I would like to thank Wheels India Ltd. which gave me the chance and my mentor which kept directing me. This experience will be one foundation of what my career will be like in the future.

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