



**2009 Symposium Greeting**  
**Dave Caracci**  
**Chairman**  
**Global Automotive Aftermarket Symposium**  
May 6, 2009

(The following may contain unintelligible or misunderstood words due to the recording quality.)

DAVE CARACCI: Good morning.

AUDIENCE: Morning.

DAVE CARACCI: First of all, thanks very much for being here. That video looked like or appeared to be about music. In reality it was about individuals around the globe using their talents for a common goal and to accomplish more than they could have individually. That said, I'd like to read to you -- with over 325 people here today, I'd like to read to you the individual countries we've got here sharing their common interest in working together. We've got Brazil, France, Japan, Mexico, Germany, Norway, the United Kingdom, 36 people Ray Datt tells me, from Canada, the USA and California.

So, we're all here to work together under common interest, and that's what the Global Symposium is about. For those of you that have known me for much of my career, and most of you have, I sold auto parts during the week but my real love was yacht racing. I got a big kick out of yacht racing for 20 years. So I'm gonna tell you an analogy that fits where we are today. About 20 years ago in one of our first races we were approaching the Detroit River.

We were moving along great, we had a great strategy, our business plan was perfect, we were gonna win the race and the wind suddenly stopped.

The wind died dead, the 15,000 pound boat that I had at the time stopped right there and did nothing. New to the sport we sat there, decided we were doomed, opened a beer and drifted aimlessly around hoping that the wind would come back before we had to drop out of the race. One of my friends, about 20 years my senior, in a boat almost identical to mine, readjusted his boat, readjusted his sail, sailed right by us to the Detroit River and won the race.

Now, being from our industry I knew immediately what I had to when the race was over. So I went to the Yacht Club bar that night and networked, trying to find out what do these guys know that we didn't know. What I found out was that they readjusted their sails for the new environment. For the what appeared to be no wind was just a different wind. It was a light wind. I also enrolled in a seminar much like this one, actually held in Chicago for two days, about boat speed. I can tell you that in the next 20 years we won many more yacht races when there was light air or no air, compared to when the wind was blowing strong.

So how does that relate to your business today and why we're here?

Well, as we've all heard from the media, the economic winds have died. There appears to be very little breeze, we've got a foul Detroit current dragging the boats backwards, if you will, holding back the businesses, much like that yacht race towards the Detroit River. We've got people saying that they're gonna

drift around and hope that the wind comes back before they have to drop out of the aftermarket race.

In fact, if you look that's all around us today. I talked about three weeks ago to a shop owner in California. And when I asked her how business was, she said, "Well, I cut my techs in half, from 8 to 4, and my business is about 50 percent down." I did a quick calculation and I wasn't very surprised. You cut the number of techs, business is half. I talked to a warehouse distributor who said, "Because of the economic forecast and all the negative news in December, I started reducing my inventory." I talked to a program group head just recently who said, "One of my manufacturers actually closed his plant for a month or so because the news was so bad and the prediction for the light air, no wind -- I'm sorry, slow business -- was so bad that he cut his -- he stopped production. Now we're running out of parts. Business is terrible."

On the other hand, I talked to a fellow in Houston. Vic, are you here? Okay. I talked to a fellow in Houston, Vic, out of -- he owns a shop or a service center in Houston. He's one of the CCPN members I work with. And I asked him how business was and what he was doing. He told me, "Well, in December --" now remember, when these other people cut inventories, shut plants and cut techs, kind of the equivalent of throwing your crew and food overboard 'cause the wind is gonna get light, it's sort of the same, um, Vic did the opposite. Vic adjusted things, he trimmed the sails, he adjusted the boat, he changed his business plan. As I remember, he even added a service writer. Vic, how's business?

VIC TARASIK: It's up 30 percent.

DAVE CARACCI: Thirty percent? That's it? Okay. Thank you.

Congratulations on adjusting your sails. I was hoping you'd be here in time.

So that's what's happening. So how does this relate to where we are today?

What does this have to do with where we are today? Well, we've got I'd call it light and variable winds. We've got a foul Detroit River current trying to drag your businesses backwards. We've got competitors in the aftermarket race, who have either decided to drift aimlessly around, or who are actually dropping out of the race. We've even got some that decided not to come to educational events such as this one.

Many said perhaps we shouldn't even have this educational event this year because of the predicted bad times. Well, the board of GAAS met and I can tell you that the Global Automotive Aftermarket Symposium, we don't do recessions. And apparently neither do you because you're here. You were the winners in the aftermarket when we had strong winds, and with the market share leaves you'll gain from attending events like this and adjusting your sails, you'll be the winners when the winds return. So congratulations to you and thanks very much for being here.

(CONCLUSION OF SESSION)

Transcribed by: jak/ss