



Behind the Wheels Podcast Transcription

Season 2, Episode 1: Trade Organizations & Associations – How Teamwork Makes the Dream Work

ANNOUNCER

You're listening to Behind the Wheels with Doug Mason, Dave Walters, and Mike Yagley. This is a show where we talk about heavy truck and medium duty axle ends. Doug, Dave, and Mike bring close to 100 years of experience and expertise in the transportation business.

Join us once a month to learn new things about axle ends. Sponsored by Alcoa® Wheels, the global leader in aluminum wheel innovation.

MIKE YAGLEY

Welcome to another episode of Behind the Wheels. I'm Mike Yagley.

DOUG MASON

I'm Doug Mason.

DAVE WALTERS

And I'm Dave Walters.

MIKE YAGLEY

We spend some time behind the wheels, well, this time, we're going to go really behind the wheels. We're going to look at the specifications and the industry organizations that the three of us participate in. And these are industry organizations that really work together, where we get together with other members of the industry. We agree to take off our company hat and put on the industry hat, where we look out for what's best for not just for ourselves, not just for our companies, but for the entire industry.

MIKE YAGLEY

And what we want to give you today is a little feel for some of the work that we're doing in those groups, and how these different groups work together to really deliver safe and effective products for you, for the users of wheels, and really the entire trucking industry.

MIKE YAGLEY

So we're going to go through today, like I said, we're going to be going through today, and we're going to be spending a little bit of time with each one of us talking about what we're up to, the different organizations we're in. And I'd like to start with Dave Walters. He's probably the closest to the actual users, the maintenance side, the trucking industry on this. So, I'd like to sort of start there, and we'll work our way around. Dave, you want to go into some of the groups you're working with?

DAVE WALTERS

Yeah. I'm going to start out with what I consider the pinnacle and that TMC, which stands for Technology & Maintenance Council. The TMC is a group that meets, and it's a group of fleet directors. And then on the other side, you have the truck builders and the suppliers to the truck. There's also dealers that go to TMC, there's educators. A lot of it is working between the fleets, and the vendors, and the truck builders, the dealers, everybody's involved in that organization to build a better truck.




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DAVE WALTERS

And to do that, TMC writes on two different levels. One is recommended practices for the industry. They break it down into engines, tires, and wheels. They break it into cabin chassis. They break it down into certain groups. These groups will write the recommended practices for the industry. There's also, that they write engineering practices for the truck OEMs to say, this is the products, and here's what's recommended about these.

DAVE WALTERS

So I mean, it hits it all up. TMC's been around for a number of years, and it has really grown in the past because it's a great working relationship between the actual fleets, and like I said, the vendors, as they call it. They call it the associates.

DAVE WALTERS

That organization is definitely where you take your hat off. They actually have a fleet forums meeting, where if these fleet customers are not being satisfied by a truck builder or a vendor, they get to stand up and just air their grievances. And it's not a very pleasurable sight to be one of those people that are called upfront and saying, well, why didn't you take care of this guy, or why is your product not working for him, and that kind of stuff.

MIKE YAGLEY

One of the great things I love about TMC, I've spent a lot of time traveling the world, in Europe and in Asia. And there is nothing like TMC anywhere else in the world where the fleets have a cohesive voice that can come back to the suppliers like us, to the OEMs, and say what they need from us, and also, where they can communicate internally.

MIKE YAGLEY

You get the best fleets talking to other up-and-coming fleets on how to do things right. And I can't tell you, it fills such a huge hole that I see in other countries. In the US, what the TMC is doing is just absolutely fantastic. And I've actually spent a lot of time talking with different leaders in the industry in other countries trying to encourage them to get a TMC sort of group together. And for one reason or another, they just don't seem able to pull it off. And I just can't say enough about the good work that happens at TMC.

DOUG MASON

And I guess, Dave, to that point as well, I think over the last number of years, there has been more of an international presence, even at the TMC meetings, from both suppliers and from some fleets who see the benefit of what is going on at TMC.

DAVE WALTERS

Absolutely. I mean, we've had contingents from Australia, and we've had from China, and we've had a lot from Mexico at times, always people from Canada. We've even had people from South America last year. So, I mean, the group is growing. And what's great about the group is when you go there, and you're working on practices for the industry, TMC polices itself. So, when you present at TMC, it's not a slideshow about your company. It's a slide show about the industry.

DAVE WALTERS

And at TMC, they have award levels. You can become a recognized associate, and then their highest honors is to be a Silver Spark Plug. Silver Spark Plug means that you've done something so tremendous in the industry that the industry would give you a Silver Spark Plug. And one of us, that our Silver Spark Plugs, have to review everything that is actually presented at TMC to make sure it's not commercial, and it's actually true to real-life information and not something that a company is trying to promote. So, they do a fantastic job of trying to keep the commercialization out of the industry, and it's about the industry. And it's very beneficial to anybody that does it because you have a voice in writing the recommended practices for the industry, and those are great things that we all live by.

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I know that we have taken those documents, those recommended practices, from TMC to customers all over the world to tell them, hey, there is no industry standard in, let's say, in Europe for torque, wheel torque, there is no industry standard in Japan for wheel torque, but this is what's happening in the US, and why they're doing things the way they do things. And you work together to develop some sort of industry standard like we have in the US.

MIKE YAGLEY

Like I said, over and over again, sometimes they can, sometimes they can't. But having that document where we have a clear voice of the fleets really carries a lot of weight globally because nobody understands the usage of these products like the fleets do. And to have that clear voice going out, that means a lot everywhere. So again, I'm just really... I know this sounds like a TMC commercial, but you guys do a lot of great work over there.

DAVE WALTERS

I would like to bring up, also, is they do have future trucks to where they're working on things 10 years down the road, what's the ideas, how can we develop these ideas? The other great thing is every RP goes through a extreme voting system. A vendor can only have one voting member. So that voting number has to go through all these RPs, read them to make sure that he believes that what's written.

DAVE WALTERS

You can write your comments down, send them back in. They review them as a committee, and then they say, okay, this is the RP. Then it goes back out, and there's a 90-days appeal process, and then it becomes an RP.

DAVE WALTERS

Everything that's done there, it's not done over back door. It's done here. "Everybody in the meeting, do you agree this is a good RP? Yes, let's vote on it, let's send it to ballot." Once it's sent to ballot, then you can write your comments. We review all of them comments.

DAVE WALTERS

When we're done with all that, the group, again, says, "This is ready, this is good," goes into a 90-day appeal process. So, when you get an RP from TMC, it has done its due diligence in the industry, and everybody's like, okay, I'm on board with that.

MIKE YAGLEY

And just for our listeners who aren't aware of what an RP is, that's a recommended practice. And those are the very descriptive, very discrete rules about how to do specific maintenance tasks typically, and it might cover things like changing a tire. Like Dave said, it goes through a lot of thought, goes into every word that goes into those RPs, and they're really good documents from a maintenance perspective.

MIKE YAGLEY

We could continue to talk about the TMC and all the great work they do there, but we should probably move on. Dave, what else are you working on?

DAVE WALTERS

Okay. Another organization that I'm heavily involved in is the CVSA, which is the Commercial Vehicle Safety Association. And CVSA is, you're actually working with the officers that go out and inspect these trucks. And as vendors there and fleet, you're there to make sure that, we all want safe vehicles driving down our highways. So, we're all working for the common good of having safe vehicles on our highway.

DAVE WALTERS

The officers that inspect, they need criteria, they don't have tools. So you have to kind of say, here's how you can inspect a truck without taking anything off or doing anything. And it has to be an imminent danger. So, some things, we say, well, that's not safe. But you got to say, hey, this could really have something bad happen to it.

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So it's a different working relationship. And then they actually go through all the violations that are, how can I say, that was questioned, or the person said, well, this shouldn't be a violation because of this. So, we actually cover all of them in these conferences. We meet twice a year. And it's very interesting when we're going through all the cases to see what inspector wrote up in the fleet saying, well, that shouldn't be a violation. And we actually talk about them and cover that, and then we change the law if need be. It's definitely a different organization than TMC, but it's a really safety-driven organization.

DOUG MASON

And I guess, Dave, something to also maybe throw in there if you would is, what kind of authority does the CVSA have, and why is that so important to the fleets to understand it?

DAVE WALTERS

The CVS can basically red tag your truck. They inspect your truck and find violations. They can red-tag it, and that truck doesn't move until those are fixed and repair. So, they have an extreme amount of authority. And with the system that we have now in the country about getting points, you don't want violations. So, these leads understand that having safe trucks, making sure all this, you don't want an out of service, but you don't even want to be cited on some of the other issues.

DAVE WALTERS

So they have tremendous power to basically put your truck out of service. And the big thing is when you get that little sticker, it's good for three months, so you're not going to be stopped by every CVS inspector. So, you get a sticker, you're good for three months, and after that, they can stop you again and inspect your truck again, and hopefully... As the industry becomes more aware of safety, this is a great organization for that.

MIKE YAGLEY

I want to sort of summarize a little bit here. We've got the TMC that really is the voice of the fleets. And CVSA is the voice of the regulatory agencies. And this covers many states too, right? This isn't just...

DAVE WALTERS

Yes.

MIKE YAGLEY

This is all 50 states.

DAVE WALTERS

All the states involved in CVSA.

MIKE YAGLEY

So those are two great different perspectives, and I think our listeners can sort of see how those work together. They have different needs, but the maintenance guys, they need to be prepared. They don't want to be red tagged, and so, what, the CVSA is really important for them.

MIKE YAGLEY

And then, what, the CVSA, you can tell... One of the critical things, and I want to highlight this for our listeners, is that term eminent danger. And what that means is that when you get red tagged, that means that there has been... that's a declaration that there's an imminent danger, that something could happen immediately. You could get back out on the road, and something could go terribly wrong. And that's the standard that the CVSA is, when you get red tagged, that that's what they're looking for.

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MIKE YAGLEY

And I think that's... To me, the first time I heard that, I thought that was a really good way to handle it because you don't want to be stopping every truck that's out on the road for every little thing that goes wrong. You want to make sure that there's some serious safety issue that's being addressed if you're going to put somebody effectively out of business for a short period of time.

MIKE YAGLEY

And I thought that was... That's a really good way to do it, and you can sort of see how the CVSA, the government in this case, the regulatory agencies, are really being sensitive to the industry, to not overstep, not be too difficult to work with. I like the way both of those... I like the way the CVSA works, and also how TMC is always trying to work to educate people so that they don't get caught in that net. Any last comments on that?

DAVE WALTERS

It's very important because of these CSA scores. CSA scores are driven to be driver, to be... All these points, the fleets don't want CSA scores to get high because they basically can put you out of business. Violations even count for that. Red tags are really bad. Violations are bad. Very important.

MIKE YAGLEY

You're active in another group, aren't you, Dave?

DAVE WALTERS

Yeah. I'm going to talk about the Tire Industry Association. It's a very different organization, but it's really out there to promote tire and wheel mounting safety. Tire Industry Association is an organization that, I have went to it to become a certified instructor. And when you do that, you go through a week-long class. You actually have to take a test at the end of class.

DAVE WALTERS

And once you become a certified instructor for TIA, you can actually hold these training classes. And basically what it is, is teaching tire personnel how to safely mount tires on the wheels, put the tire and wheel onto the vehicle correctly and safely. It's basically training tire technicians how to install tire and wheels, what to look for for safety issues in tires and wheels, then they can become a certified technician. Or you can go to the week-long class and become a certified instructor where you can teach these other ones the classes.

DAVE WALTERS

So to me, it's a great thing for the industry, because if you're a fleet guy or anything to do with that, and if you go into a shop that you see TIA stickers on the guys, that's the patches. That's really telling you that these guys have been trained. I mean, they have to pass a test, they know all the right ways to doing tire and wheel maintenance. So, it's a great organization for the industry.

MIKE YAGLEY

We had an episode on TIA a while back, and a very impressive organization. They also do such a great job. And I think our listeners can sort of see, this is really focused on... all three of these organizations are focused on safety and making sure that the trucks that are going down the road are safe. Pretty much everybody in this industry, all of these organizations, I think you're going to see this as we go on with some of the more design and engineering side of things, really, we are deeply concerned with the safety of these products that are being released, and how all of these different organizations work together to make sure that they are safe and effective for everybody who uses them.

DAVE WALTERS

There's one more that I'd like to bring up, and this will be very quick. The Vehicle Maintenance Managers Conference is held every year in Seattle, and it is very similar to TMC, but it's really kind of a West Coast show. The VMMC, you have a meeting where the industry experts are presenting material to these guys, it's noncommercial, absolutely noncommercial, about safety practices, about anything like that.

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I just wanted to kind of throw that in, that if you are on the West Coast, and TMC normally holds their annual meeting in Florida and maybe one in Cleveland this year, the West Coast gets very much involved in the VMCC. I just wanted to kind of throw that out there, but it's like their version of TMC, West Coast.

MIKE YAGLEY

Okay. Thank you, Dave. Doug, do you want to cover some of the engineering side?

DOUG MASON

Yeah. Just a few, I guess, really critical, from a standpoint of functionality in the field, would be The Tire & Rim Association, would be one organization that is very important, not only in what we're talking about here, truck and bus, but they would cover basically any tire and wheel combination, past car, light truck, off the road, agriculture, that type of thing.

DOUG MASON

And again, the focus really is interchangeability in the industry. You can imagine, if you could put any tire in any rim, you'd have all kinds of potential issues relative to safety. How much pressure should I put in there? What is the load that it can use? What size rim can it go on? And that's really what Tire & Rim is working to address, is the interchangeability standards for tires, rims, and valves, and associated parts.

DOUG MASON

So again, it's made up of, in the industry, the manufacturers of the parts, in general, are heavily involved among others. And it ensures that for any given rim, the size of tire that can be safely used with that is set out. And they put out a yearbook every year that can be obtained electronically as well. So, for those that are in the design field, or those who are trying to see what will work.

DOUG MASON

You think about even a Belle tire, and you'd go to them and say, okay, well, hey, I've got this car, and it has a 17x7, what tire can I put on it? Well, they're going to say, well, what load rating do you need? And they're going to be able to go through, really, the standards that have been put together by The Tire & Rim Association to say this is the range of parts that you can actually utilize safely for your particular application. So that's really what The Tire & Rim Association does. And I know you've been a member for a long time as well, Mike, and engaged in it. And there's some other things that you may want to add.

MIKE YAGLEY

Sure. Well, I guess one thing with Tire & Rim, and I always let people know, they don't know how much they're familiar with Tire & Rim. Because every tire that's sold out there has some sort of Tire & Rim... or every wheel has some sort of Tire & Rim documentation buried in the technical information.

MIKE YAGLEY

And for example, if you look at any wheel that we sell, and I think this is any wheel made in the US actually, if you look at the roll stamp on that, and you're going to see a DOT- something. And it'll be typically DOT-T. And that T means that this wheel was designed to the Tire & Rim standards.

MIKE YAGLEY

Sometimes you're going to see a DOT-E, which is going to be to the European version of Tire & Rim, which is ETRTO, that's the European Tyre and Rim Technical Organisation. Or it might be going to the Japanese version, DOT-J.

MIKE YAGLEY

So what that's saying is that when you're putting a tire onto a DOT-T wheel, that wheel was designed for tires that are designed to go onto the tire and rim wheel geometries. Now Europe, and the ETRTO, and North America have worked... and TNRA I should say. TNRA and ETRTO have worked very hard together to commonize their geometries.

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MIKE YAGLEY

So there are still a couple of little tweaks and tunes to it in some of the specifications. But for the most part, if you have a European tire, it can go on a North American wheel. As a matter of fact, I think 100% now. If you have an European tire, it can go on a North American wheel, and if you have a North American tire, it can go on a European wheel because of all the work that's been happening on a global level to make sure that all these tires and wheels that are out there can work together.

MIKE YAGLEY

And like Doug said, it's the whole goal of Tire & Rim, is to make sure that the tires and the rims can work together flawlessly for the customers. If you don't know about Tire & Rim, then Tire & Rim is doing its job because that's one headache you're not having to worry about.

DOUG MASON

That's right. So, there's a lot of work, like you said, that really goes on behind the scenes to ensure that designers like we have, and like many other companies have, can go to something and say, okay, I can design it to a standard. And in this case, the tire and rim itself is to a standard. And to go a step further would be to start talking about the Society of Automotive Engineers, which is now just called SAE International. And it covers a wide breadth of, we'll say, mobility. It's a very large organization. Most of you will probably have heard of it. I think it has over 130,000 engineers who are part of it with technical experts and broken down into many different divisions. But the one we'd want to talk about today that we're really involved in is the Truck and Bus Committee, the Truck and Bus Council, and itself is broken up into a few different committees, we'll call them.

DOUG MASON

And again, the focus there is on interchangeability, but not just the tire and rim itself, but basically all the components of the wheel ends, the axle, brakes, electrical, electronics. It has a chassis and powertrain committee. So, it's really on the engineering design level that we get heavily engaged into truck and bus. And they come up with, again, recommended practices, there's standards that come out. Just as an example, there's SAE standards that really dictate bolt circles with rim sizes, with what size bolt holes you can use. There's specifications that would tell you how to test wheel nuts so that you know. If you want to confirm that you're getting a quality part, there's actually tests that are developed, along with fatigue testing, and kind of can go on and on.

DOUG MASON

So it's not just componentry, but it's also testing and interface. At another level, I would say then, just tire and rim. But there is a truck and bus committee that we are heavily engaged in. And again, Mike, I know that you're involved in that as well. And if you want to add a little more flavor, go ahead.

MIKE YAGLEY

Yeah, I have been involved with SAE for about 30 years now. I guess the kinds of things that they do are really remarkable. I'm going to tell a story about one SAE specification, which is the side impact. It's a passenger car specification. But the story is, is that somebody was driving a vehicle on ice. They turned the wheel and hit a curb. They just kept sliding forward, the vehicle kept sliding forward at a pretty good speed. It hit a curb, and they crashed, and they were hurt, and they said that the tire or the wheel was damaged before it hit the curb, and that that was the reason for the accident. And you had all this trial litigation and all this stuff going on.

MIKE YAGLEY

And a test was developed to see what a wheel would look like, what a wheel and tire... this was back in the 70s, what a wheel and tire would look like if it hit a curb. So, they developed this test to hit the wheel from a certain angle like it was hitting a curb. And they could match the geometry of the damage to the wheel to what happened in the specific accident. And they said, that's a pretty good test, we want to make sure that the wheel can survive, you're sliding on ice into a curb, that the wheel and tire can survive that.

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So that's one of the tests that was developed that is currently being... actually, I'm working with a lot of people in the US and Europe to take another look at this test because it's changing with the load ratings on vehicles.

MIKE YAGLEY

But the whole idea here is that there's real world things that happen out in the field that we might look at, and we might say, you know what, that's something we need to be careful about, and it would be good to have a test to make sure that doesn't happen again. So, we develop these tests, and whether it's like Doug was saying, whether it's a fitment type thing where we make sure that everything fits, that the hub fits onto the wheel, or that the brake is not too big, that you can fit the wheel over the brake. We have standards for that.

MIKE YAGLEY

We have standards for things like the one I just told you about, to make sure that if you're sliding in a vehicle, and you hit a curb, going sideways, that your wheel and tire is not going to explode, and you're not going to have catastrophic damage. And there are many, many tests like that, that go into the design that we use to design the wheels, design the whole vehicle, as a matter of fact, to make sure that those vehicles are safe for the users.

MIKE YAGLEY

Like Doug was saying, that's a little level up. That's not so close to what you're doing, but I guess what most of our listeners are dealing with. But next time you go sliding into a curb with your vehicle, maybe think about that test that made sure that your wheel didn't explode on you in that impact.

DOUG MASON

That's more from, I think it's, as we said, we keep going up. This is the design aspect of it, and it needs to be designed to live, but it also has to be designed so that you can perform maintenance on it. And that's where the TMC would come in to ensure that, us as designers, are not creating things that can't be worked on.

MIKE YAGLEY

So I'll go into some of the stuff I work on. The next level up is what I'm involved with. I wouldn't say next level up because of... What we're doing is ISO, which is the International Standards Organization. That's a more international view of things. I work with people primarily from Japan, and Europe, and the US. We work together to come up with global standards that basically are used by smaller countries, people like Saudi Arabia for example. We were dealing with the folks in Saudi Arabia where they don't have the technical expertise that we have here in the US, or in Europe, or in Japan, but they want to have safe standards.

MIKE YAGLEY

So what they do is they come to people like us and ISO, and we'll put together a standard, and then they'll take that standard and make it into some sort of regulatory standard or something, maybe a test or something that they're going to do in their country. It's the countries like us, like the US, putting stuff together, trying to put together international standards, all working together with the Japanese, the Europeans, and whoever else wants to participate, to come up with stuff that is going to be useful for people who don't have the resources that we have.

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This is, again, one of those things that the industry is trying to reach out to keep people safe. Of course, we're trying to keep people safe, and the maintenance organizations, and the fleets throughout this country. But we are also interested in keeping people safe globally. So we put a lot of work trying to put things out there that can help even some of these smaller countries that don't have the resources that we do. Basically, the way ISO works is it takes the SAE standards, it takes the German DIN standards, it takes the Japanese JATMA standards, and then each one of these countries will say, hey, we made this change to our standard, we think this might be good for a global standard. And then the Germans, and the Americans, and the Japanese, and the French, and the Italians, and the Brits, we all get together, and we look at it, and we say, well, that's great, we really like that, oh, this is going to be a problem for us and so forth.

MIKE YAGLEY

And you sort of hammer out a global standard that we think is going to be good for everybody. I'm the chairman of the ISO Wheel Committee. And we also work in ISO with the folks in the brake. We're actually part of the chassis ISO group. So, we're working very closely with the hubs, and the brakes, and all the chassis guys, and even some of the folks from US military are involved, and so we work with them too.

MIKE YAGLEY

This is just a brief overview of all the different standards organizations that just the three of us are involved with, to try to help the industry, not just in the US, but globally, to put out good and safe products. Well, I think that about covers it. Really appreciate your listening to the show. I hope to see you next time.

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