


Strategic sales in the automotive spare parts market in the metropolitan area of Medellín

Ventas estratégicas en el mercado de repuestos automotriz área metropolitana de Medellín.

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Abstract

Introduction: The auto parts market in Medellín is heavily influenced by the importation of components, the growth of e-commerce, and the accelerated entry of hybrid/electric technologies (Ospina, 2024). For small businesses and workshops to be competitive with dealerships and new digital players, they must integrate omnichannel strategies, advanced inventory management, value-added services, technical training in new technologies, and strategic trade and local alliances. These measures make it possible to increase sales, improve customer loyalty, and reduce vulnerability to informal competition (Ospina, 2024). **Objective:** To analyze the sales strategies applied in the automotive auto parts market for cars in the Medellín metropolitan area, to identify opportunities for innovation and improvement that strengthen business competitiveness and sustainability. **Methodology:** The methodology used in this article was qualitative and documentary-analytical, aimed at gaining a deep understanding of the behavior of the auto parts market in the Medellín metropolitan area, the competitive dynamics of the sector, and the commercial and innovative strategies applied by its players. **Reflections:** The future of the sector's ity in the Medellín metropolitan area will depend on the ability of auto parts distributors to integrate market knowledge, technological innovation, and customer-centric commercial strategies, transforming traditional dynamics into real opportunities for growth. **Conclusions:** The competitiveness of the auto parts market in Medellín depends on the ability of small and medium-sized players to adopt innovative commercial strategies and digital transformations that strengthen their positioning, optimize the customer experience, and ensure their sustainability in the face of a constantly changing automotive environment.

Key words: Auto parts; Innovation; Market; Marketing; Strategies.

Resumen

Introducción: El mercado de recambios de automóvil en Medellín se ve muy influido por la importación de componentes, el crecimiento del comercio electrónico y la rápida implantación de las tecnologías híbridas y eléctricas (Ospina, 2024). Para que las pequeñas empresas y los talleres puedan competir con los concesionarios y los nuevos actores digitales, deben integrar estrategias omnicanal, una gestión avanzada del inventario, servicios de valor añadido, formación técnica en nuevas tecnologías y alianzas comerciales y locales estratégicas. Estas medidas permiten aumentar las ventas, mejorar la fidelidad de los clientes y reducir la vulnerabilidad frente a la competencia informal (Ospina, 2024). **Objetivo:** Analizar las estrategias de venta aplicadas en el mercado de recambios de automóviles en el área metropolitana de Medellín, con el fin de identificar oportunidades de innovación y mejora que fortalezcan la competitividad y la sostenibilidad de las empresas. **Metodología:** La metodología utilizada en este artículo fue cualitativa y documental-analítica, con el objetivo de obtener una comprensión profunda del comportamiento del mercado de recambios de automóviles en el área metropolitana de Medellín, las dinámicas competitivas del sector y las estrategias comerciales e innovadoras aplicadas por sus actores. **Reflexiones:** El futuro de la competitividad del sector en el área metropolitana de Medellín dependerá de la capacidad de los distribuidores de repuestos de integrar el conocimiento del mercado, la innovación tecnológica y las estrategias comerciales centradas en el cliente, transformando las dinámicas tradicionales en oportunidades reales de crecimiento. **Conclusiones:** La competitividad del mercado de repuestos de automóviles en Medellín depende de la capacidad de los pequeños y medianos actores para adoptar estrategias comerciales innovadoras y transformaciones digitales que refuercen su posicionamiento, optimicen la experiencia del cliente y garanticen su sostenibilidad ante un entorno automovilístico en constante cambio.

Palabras clave: Repuestos de automóviles; Innovación; Mercado; Marketing; Estrategias.



1. INTRODUCTION

The auto parts market in the Medellín metropolitan area has established itself as one of the most dynamic industrial and commercial sectors in Antioquia due to the growth of the vehicle fleet. According to the Secretary of Mobility of Medellín, Mateo González, “Cars have increased by 500% in the last 20 years; we went from 330,000 registered vehicles in 2000 to 2,600,000 in 2024” (Teleantioquia Noticias, 2025, parr. 1). Added to this is the presence of wholesale distributors, the growth of specialized repair shops, and auto parts stores. This market has generated intense competition, where companies must adapt to increasingly informed and demanding consumers. According to studies of the Colombian automotive sector, the demand for auto parts is influenced by factors such as vehicle obsolescence, the importation of components, and the technological evolution of automotive systems (Ocampo & Prada, 2016).

Consumer behavior in this sector is oriented toward the search for quality, availability, warranty, and technical advice, which raises the need for more personalized and efficient commercial strategies. In turn, the growth of e-commerce and the digitization of processes have transformed the dynamics of buying and selling, driving a change in traditional distribution and marketing structures, but only in a small sector such as large dealerships in Medellín, which tend to raise the price slightly for the producer.

In such a competitive market, strategic sales become the differentiating factor for achieving business sustainability; these strategies integrate loyalty, segmentation, price management, positioning, and logistics alliances. Successful companies in this field develop a comprehensive view of the customer, leveraging data analysis and customer relationship management (CRM) tools, which allows them not only to strengthen their after-sales service but also to boost profitability and corporate reputation (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Furthermore, in highly digitized sectors such as the automotive industry, logistical efficiency contributes significantly to competitiveness, as speed of delivery and optimization of operating costs become strategic pillars for gaining market share.

On the other hand, digital transformation in the sector is driving business models based on omnichannel retailing, inventory automation, and digital communication with customers. adoption of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), predictive analytics, and data management enables more informed and efficient decision-making, which contributes to building a sustainable competitive advantage (KPMG, 2025).

2. METHODOLOGY

The study was developed using a qualitative approach and a documentary-analytical research design, based on a systematic review of official, trade association, and academic secondary sources. Through descriptive, comparative, and critical analysis, the auto parts market in Medellín was characterized, current commercial strategies were evaluated, and the impact of innovation

and digital transformation was examined. Based on theoretical frameworks of strategy and innovation, strategic guidelines were generated to improve the sector's competitiveness.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The following section describes the theoretical issues that allow us to delve deeper into the title proposed in the development of this article.

The automotive auto parts market is characterized by a fragmented structure, involving manufacturers, importers, distributors, and retailers. Its growth is closely linked to the number of vehicles in circulation, road conditions, and the culture of preventive maintenance. In Colombia, this sector has shown significant dynamism due to the expansion of the vehicle fleet and the constant demand for replacement parts and maintenance services, especially in urban areas such as Medellín, where the automotive ecosystem continues to grow (Dávila, 2019).

In 2024, the auto parts manufacturing market in Latin America reached \$14.5 billion, with an annual growth projection of 4.8% between 2025 and 2034. In that same year, Colombia imported auto parts worth \$3.1 billion, representing an increase of 3.79% compared to 2023, according to data from the DIAN. (Otero, 2025, parr. 3)

This growth is due, in part, to the increase in the number of vehicles on the road especially motorcycles and greater demand for specialized maintenance and spare parts, as well as the growth of the hybrid and electric vehicle market (Otero, 2025). However, this scenario contrasts with the closure of the Colmotores plant in April of the previous year, which reflects the difficulties faced by some assemblers. In addition, domestic auto parts manufacturers face competitive challenges, both in terms of export prices and local costs (Otero, 2025).

The automotive sector in Colombia is going through a period in which sales figures are not positive, as the vehicle segment has been in decline for over a year, according to data from Andi and Fenalco, despite the upturn in April.

The auto parts segment has also been seriously affected. According to Carlos Andrés Pineda, executive president of Asopartes, the guild's sales fell 11.69% in the first two months of 2024, according to data from Radar de las Autopartes sourced from Dian (Ospina, 2024). Pineda reported that in 2023, the sector recorded sales of \$18.3 trillion, but that these sales represented a 3.3% drop compared to 2022 (Sectorial, 2024). In addition, Pineda highlighted that the most commercialized products in Colombia are those prone to wear and tear and periodic replacement, such as lubricants, filters, brakes, batteries, spark plugs, shock absorbers, suspension, and tires (Ospina, 2024).

According to Ospina (2024),

When there is a decline in new vehicle sales, demand for auto parts is likely to increase

temporarily, as there will be a greater need to repair and maintain existing vehicles. This situation would benefit distributors, repair shops, and other vehicle maintenance-related businesses in the short and medium term. (parr. 7)

Impocali manager Juan Carlos Guevara pointed out that the Envigado assembly plant is currently operating at over 35% capacity, reflecting the dynamics of the automotive and auto parts market (Ospina, 2024).

He also indicated that 90% of the parts and accessories used in the country are imported under the CKD modality, mainly from China, the United States, Brazil, Japan, Germany, and Mexico, while only 10% are produced domestically (Ospina, 2024).

Guevara explained that these figures show the general contraction that the industry is undergoing, which not only affects the auto parts sector, but also other segments linked to the production chain. He also warned of the risks arising from the global logistics situation and disruptions in trade routes. In his words:

We are seeing stability in the supply of auto parts from the different sources we manage worldwide. We just have to pay special attention to what is happening with the international logistics chain, derived from the situation in the Red Sea and the measures that shipping companies are having to take [...] as they are incurring significant cost overruns by using others. (Ospina, 2024, parr. 10)

According to figures from the National Tax and Customs Directorate (DIAN), Colombia imported auto parts worth USD 3.132 billion in 2024, confirming that around 85% of auto parts sold in the country are imported (Neira, 2025). This represents a 3.79% increase compared to 2023, although it falls short of the levels recorded in 2022, when imports totaled USD 3.812 billion.

According to the Motor Vehicle and Parts Industry Association (Otero, 2025), recent decisions by US President Donald Trump to impose new tariffs on vehicles and auto parts are having a significant impact on the global automotive industry and particularly affecting countries with high dependence on external inputs, such as Colombia (Neira, 2025). In response to this situation, Asopartes CEO Carlos Andrés Pineda Osorio warned that:

“These tariff increases would not only raise the cost of importing essential auto parts to Colombia but also affect the competitiveness of our exports to the US market” (Neira, 2025, para. 6).

Given this outlook, Otero (2025) proposes several strategies to mitigate the effects of tariffs and strengthen the national automotive ecosystem, including market diversification, boosting local industry through investment in technology and innovation, diplomatic dialogue with the United States, and generating added value in domestic products (Neira, 2025).

On the need for the sector to adapt, Pineda Osorio emphasized that:

“Market diversification and the strengthening of our local industry are key to maintaining competitiveness and ensuring the sector’s sustainable growth” (Neira, 2025, parr. 8).

In Colombia, auto parts imports are highly significant. According to *El Tiempo*, parts from the United States accounted for 14.4% of the country’s total import volume in 2024, equivalent to approximately US\$452 million. This figure makes the US the second most important trading partner for this sector, according to data from Asopartes and the Virtual Business Center based on DIAN records (Avendaño, 2025).

In addition, according to the trade association, the main source of spare parts for cars is China, followed by the US, Brazil, and India, while for motorcycles, the predominant sources are India, China, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Taiwan (Avendaño, 2025).

In terms of the logistics chain, significant delays are reported: importing a part can take two to three months if it comes from nearby destinations, or up to six to eight months on more complex routes, which is exacerbated by strikes at national ports and global tensions (Avendaño, 2025).

Regarding the role of domestic manufacturers, Asopartes estimates that only about 15% of parts and accessories come from local industry.

Regarding individual trade through platforms such as Amazon, the association believes that it could have an impact on the local market, albeit limited, especially due to the technical nature and cost of the parts required by consumers (Avendaño, 2025).

In terms of innovation, technological advances have made workshops more sophisticated: today, technicians with mechatronic knowledge and advanced tools are required to repair modern cars with complex electronic systems, which implies continuous training (Avendaño, 2025).

Finally, quality control over imported auto parts is not the responsibility of Asopartes, but rather of the Ministry of Transportation and the ANSV (National Road Safety Agency), which regulate critical components such as brakes, tires, and other safety parts (Avendaño, 2025). In addition, according to the entity, it is estimated that 10% of the total value of auto parts entering the country corresponds to contraband, according to technical meetings with the DIAN (Avendaño, 2025).

Analyzing the current situation of the auto parts sector, it is now time to define what innovative sales management strategies should be implemented by auto parts stores, small workshops, and small importers to keep up with large dealerships and the arrival of n. It is important to reference the following authors, according to Bracho Navarro new vehicles, and what strategies should be implemented to increase sales in Medellín.

According to Bracho Navarro (2016), business innovation is one of the intrinsic qualities of the business environment, as companies are dynamic entities capable of adapting their capabilities to the demands of a competitive and constantly changing global market. This highlights the

importance of government policies in promoting competitive environments that enhance business productivity and profitability.

Business innovation requires the development of organizational conditions that foster systematic innovation, supported by digital processes and tools that enable companies to remain competitive in a globalized market. In this sense, marketing plays a fundamental role in these innovation processes. The Royal Spanish Academy defines marketing as “a set of principles and practices that seek to increase trade, especially demand. Study of the procedures and resources aimed at this end” (Real Academia Española, 2024).

In today’s environment, digital marketing, which includes social media, blogs, wikis, and other platforms, has become a key strategic resource for companies to build a solid position with new and potential customers (Kannan & Li, 2017). This type of marketing not only facilitates visibility but also supports value creation: it is considered a discipline that combines science and art to explore, design, and deliver value to customers, satisfying their needs in a profitable and measurable way (Lemon & Verhoef, 2022).

In addition, modern marketing is increasingly moving toward a social and personalized approach: consumers prefer brands that engage with them through digital communities, and the personalization of services based on data analysis allows for a deeper connection with the customer, strengthening their loyalty and purchasing decisions (Wedel & Kannan, 2016).

E-commerce has established itself as a fundamental axis for the relationship between businesses and consumers, facilitating more direct and personalized interactions that strengthen business competitiveness. According to Statista (2023), the sustained growth of e-commerce has prompted organizations to adopt models focused on the customer experience and on building long-term relationships through digital platforms. In this context, innovating in sales processes requires implementing constant changes aimed at satisfying customer needs, optimizing the value proposition, and reinforcing corporate identity. As Deloitte (2022) points out, the integration of digital tools and omnichannel strategies increases commercial efficiency and improves customer acquisition, promoting business growth. Likewise, innovation in marketing and sales has become a crucial driver of development, especially in highly competitive markets where differentiation depends on the ability to offer personalized digital experiences (Agazu & Kero, 2024). Today, it is no longer enough to sell well: it is necessary to differentiate oneself. The role of the commercial area has evolved from a simple transaction to the generation of strategic value. In a context of increasing commoditization, many companies face strong competition with similar proposals and new operators with disruptive tactics (Kotler et al., 2017). For a sales strategy to be truly effective, sales and marketing must work in a coordinated manner and in line with the business strategy, sharing ideas, campaigns, and key messages. This collaboration, known as “SMarketing,” aligns both teams around the same value proposition, optimizes resources, and enhances the customer experience at all touchpoints (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016).

Technology is undoubtedly redefining modern sales strategies, enabling companies to operate more efficiently, interact with customers in a personalized way, and make data-driven deci-

sions. Tools such as automation, CRM platforms, and artificial intelligence are empowering sales teams to remain competitive in an ever-evolving market. These technologies simplify processes, improve customer interactions, and provide valuable *insights*, allowing sales teams to focus on the most valuable opportunities. Companies that embrace these innovations will be better prepared to adapt, grow, and thrive as technology continues to transform the sales landscape. “By leveraging the right tools, companies can unlock their full potential and maintain a strong competitive advantage” (Rito, 2025, para. 15).

The automotive parts market in the Medellín Metropolitan Area has experienced sustained growth over the last decade, driven by the increase in the number of vehicles on the road and the ongoing need to keep vehicles running. Nationally, Colombia’s vehicle fleet is aging: more than 60% of vehicles are over 10 years old, which increases the demand for parts due to natural wear and tear on components (Fasecolda, 2024). This dynamic is also reflected in Medellín and nearby municipalities, where preventive and corrective maintenance is a key factor in the market’s operation.

The market also faces structural challenges that affect its competitiveness. One of the most significant is the smuggling of auto parts, which introduces products of illegal origin that do not meet quality standards and are potentially dangerous for users. DIAN (2023) points out that the smuggling of auto parts generates millions in losses for formal traders and jeopardizes the mechanical integrity of vehicles, while also affecting road safety.

Another determining factor is the age of the regional vehicle fleet. According to a report in the newspaper *La República*, vehicles in the Medellín Metropolitan area are on average models from around 2010, which places them in the categories of greatest wear and tear and frequent repair needs (Rodríguez, 2025).

Finally, the dynamics of the dollar have a direct impact on the spare parts market, given that a large part of the products are imported. When the exchange rate increases, merchants must assume higher costs, which is reflected in increases in prices for the final consumer. According to the Banco de la República (2025), exchange rate volatility represents a key source of vulnerability for firms in Colombia, particularly those exposed to foreign currency obligations or dependent on imported inputs, as it can affect their investment capacity, liquidity, and overall financial stability. In the automotive sector, these effects influence both product availability and the stability of the local market.

4. REFLECTIONS

The study of the automotive parts market in the Medellín metropolitan area shows that the current competitive dynamics transcend traditional marketing approaches and require a profound reconfiguration of management strategies. The evidence analyzed shows that the transformations in the environment, characterized by the digitization of consumption, the diversification

of the vehicle supply, and the increase in formal and informal competition, require companies in the sector to have a greater capacity for strategic adaptation.

In this sense, the incorporation of data analytics tools, digital commercial management systems, and omnichannel-based customer experience models are emerging as decisive elements for achieving higher levels of efficiency, differentiation, and business sustainability. Likewise, the adoption of innovative management practices favors the professionalization of the sector, allowing small and medium-sized distributors to approach the operational standards of large dealerships, closing historical gaps in service, availability, and added value.

Consequently, the future competitiveness of the auto parts sector in Medellín will depend on the ability of its players to strategically articulate market knowledge, technology management, and commercial innovation. Only through this integration will it be possible to respond effectively to changes in the environment and consolidate robust value propositions that strengthen the position of companies in the face of constantly evolving consumers.

5. CONCLUSIONS

SMEs in the auto parts sector in Medellín can compete effectively with dealerships and new players if they transform their business model: moving from parts sellers to solution providers (fast delivery, technical advice, B2B contracts, EV capabilities). The combination of practical digitization, collaborative inventory management, technical training, and trade associations offers a realistic and profitable path to increased sales and sustainability.

Reflection shows that the auto parts sector in Medellín has solid structural foundations, a large vehicle fleet, and an ecosystem of distributors, warehouses, and repair shops; but it faces an environment of rapid change. Future competitiveness will lie in the combination of efficient logistics, strategic digitization, high-value after-sales service offerings, and trade association cooperation. Companies that integrate these dimensions and migrate from reactive tactics to proactive strategies will be best positioned to capture demand, including the emerging demand associated with electric mobility, and sustain profitability in the face of international competitive pressure.

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