

Hercules Will Add Products, Build on Dealer Program in 2021

New products, program enhancements and additional support from American Tire Distributors Inc. (ATD) are some of the things that Hercules dealers can expect to see in 2021, says Josh Simpson, senior vice president, proprietary brands, ATD.

“We’ve maintained a pretty steady cadence” of new product introductions, according to Simpson.

Within the last 15 months, Hercules has added two products to its Terra Trac line: the Terra Trac HPT, which replaced the Hercules Terra Trac HTS, and the Terra Trac AT II, which features 3-Peak Mountain Snowflake certification.

The Avalanche TT - the latest bolt-on to Hercules’ Avalanche winter tire line - also hit the market. And ATD expanded the Hercules Strong Guard truck tire line with the addition of the Strong Guard HDO regional-haul drive tire.

“We’re going to keep our foot on the gas” in 2021, says Simpson.

“In the second half, we’ll be introducing two new lines geared toward the SUV all-terrain segment and the light truck all-terrain segment. And we’re going to continue to transform the Hercules H series (truck tire line) into the Strong Guard line.

“We’re really trying to help our dealers capture market share. We have to make sure we keep up to speed with the market.”

The goal is to become a “one-stop brand” by utilizing the reach and resources of parent company ATD, he says.

“Hercules offers OTR tires. We offer various ST trailer tires. We offer industrial tires. We now offer lawn and garden tires. I believe we’ve been able to round out our product portfolio.”

Program powers up

“Everybody has a different definition of ‘tier,’ but we see ourselves in what we call ‘the value segment,’” says Simpson.

“But it’s not just about the product. It’s about programs and what we bring to the table, combined with distribution.”

Simpson says ATD will continue to invest in the Hercules Power Program, which encompasses more than 4,000 independent dealer locations.

“In 2020, we focused on communication to our family of dealers - being a support arm and providing resources to help them navigate through COVID-19.”

Hercules also added a new tier to the program “called Diamond Level. What that provides is an increased payout for dealers who commit a larger portion of their

business to Hercules.

“We now offer two consumer rebates a year” to drive traffic to dealers’ locations, while continuing to offer other program features, including sales incentives, “retail rewards,” warranties “that protect both the dealer and the consumer,” and more.

Simpson notes that Hercules did not pull back on investing in its dealer program during the early months of the COVID-19 crisis as “that was really a time when our (customers) needed it the most.

“On top of that, we've improved our communications with our dealers. We try to make sure we are talking to our dealers on a monthly basis - letting them know about new promotions and new products.

“But as much as things change, things also stay the same,” he notes. “We continue to focus on exceeding our customers’ expectations. We continue to offer them quality products. We continue to have one of the best fill rates in the industry.” (Simpson did not provide a specific fill rate percentage.)

Growth platform

ATD will continue to invest in Hercules’ marketing across multiple channels, including digital, broadcast, video and sports sponsorships.

“Last year, we announced year-round college sports sponsorships,” says Simpson. “We sponsor major league fishing. We also do some sponsorships in the hunting lifestyle (arena.) Collectively, everything we’re doing helps increase brand

awareness."

"We're never satisfied with our market share. But we are happy with where we're positioned in the market."

ATD, which acquired Hercules six years ago, "has given Hercules a platform on which to grow and expand. They've invested capital so we can grow our product screen. We've done that year over year. We have touch points with our products all over NA - more than we ever had before."

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