Suspa Holdings GmbH is a global manufacturer of gas struts, damping and adjustment devices for automotive and industrial applications and height adjusters for furniture, and frictions dampers for washing machines.

Established in 1951 and headquartered in Altdorf / Nuremberg, Germany, Suspa has manufacturing locations in Germany, USA, India, China and the Czech Republic and sales offices throughout the world. Suspa has a 15 - 20 per cent share of the global market in gas filled struts that are used for hatch-back doors and bonnet lifts in the automotive industry and is a dominant player in the global market for friction dampers for washing machines, with a share of around 50 percent.

Suspa Pneumatics India manufactures pneumatic lifts for passenger cars, height adjusters and tilting mechanisms for chairs/ furniture and friction dampers for washing machines. In India Suspa Pneumatics is among the main suppliers of pneumatic lifts for large auto OEMs such as General Motors, Hyundai Motors India Limited, Maruti Udyog Limited and Tata Motors, catering to all hatch-back vehicles.
Strong growth in India’s passenger car market, Suspa Pneumatics India today contributes nearly 15 – 20 per cent of the global growth of Suspa Holdings in this sector. The company is now trying to replicate its success in the Indian automobile components market to other developing markets as well.

Early investments paying rich dividends
The company attributes its foresight in investing in production capacity and technology as its most critical factors for its success in India.

Proactive investment in capacity...
The company is able to meet the current demand because it had proactively invested in building capacity early. Significant production capacity (2 million auto struts per annum) was installed progressively, though the demand at that time was considerably less. This strategy enabled the company to successfully expand its customer base.

Successful transformation from furniture to auto components
Suspa’s decision to enter the Indian market was aimed at leveraging India as a low cost manufacturing base. While the company started out predominantly manufacturing furniture components, it has today been transformed into a leading manufacturer of pneumatic lifts and struts for automobiles. The company’s successful foray into the auto industry commenced with supplying gas filled struts to Daewoo Motors India for their Matiz car and Hyundai Motors for their popular hatch-back car Santro. The association with Hyundai helped the company to establish a name for itself in the industry and this has enabled the company to win contracts from other large auto OEMs such as Maruti Udyog Limited (MUL), Tata Motors and General Motors.

Today the company enjoys a 75 per cent share in the auto struts market in India. Aided by the strong growth in India’s passenger car market, Suspa Pneumatics India today contributes nearly 15 – 20 per cent of the global growth of Suspa Holdings in this sector. The company is now trying to replicate its success in the Indian automobile components market to other developing markets as well.
Future Plans

Based on its strong presence in India's passenger car market and the projected growth in the sector, the company plans to increase its production capacity for automotive struts from the current 2 million automobile struts to 5 million in the year 2007.

The company also plans to shift production of more product lines to India and increase the export from India from its current share of 10 per cent to around 25 per cent. This is in line with the company's plan to make India a global supplier for auto components.

Also on the anvil are plans for improving productivity through automation of key processes.

and also increase the market share to include large volume players like Maruti Udyog Ltd and Tata Motors. In fact, its success in the auto market, coupled with the strong growth in India's auto sector, has prompted the company to plan an increase in the capacity from 2 million to 5 million in 2007.

...and Technology
The company was also willing to invest in new technology for its initial engagement with key customers even though the volume involved at that time was very low (5 per cent of production). These investments have resulted in technologically superior products and the company has thus been able to differentiate itself in an otherwise commoditised market place, in terms of its product's superior performance, longer life and ability to operate within greater extremes of temperature.

Commitment to quality
Maintaining consistent quality levels and flexibility/willingness to meet customer expectation has contributed a lot to the company’s success. Suspa’s quality system is recognised internationally through registration by TUV Rhineland to ISO/TS 16949-2002, an International Automotive Quality Standard.

Knowledge sharing and teamwork
The company gives a lot of importance to knowledge sharing amongst its employees at various locations. Every year two engineers from India are sent to overseas plants for knowledge transfer. This provides a good learning opportunity and serves as a platform for sharing the best practises being followed at various locations. Team work is also emphasised and well appreciated in the company – different teams work on areas of improvement and the learnings are shared with all the concerned departments in the company.

Suspa Pneumatics India Ltd: At a glance
- Parent company: Suspa Holding GmbH
- The Indian Subsidiary was transformed from a furniture component manufacturer to auto component manufacturer.
- Factors for success: Early investment in capacity and technology, commitment to quality, teamwork and exchange programs.
- Future plans: Capacity expansion, shift manufacturing of more product lines to India, increase share of exports and automate key processes.