

# **OPPORTUNITY PROFILE**

Technical Product Manager

**Aaron's Automotive Products, Division of  
Aftermarket Technology Corporation.**

**Springfield, Missouri**

Re-manufacturers of engines and  
transmissions



## **Overview**

PROformance Powertrain Products of Springfield, Missouri, is seeking a new Technical Product Manager. PROformance is the independent aftermarket brand name of engines & transmissions for Aaron's Automotive, an operating unit of Aftermarket Technology Corporation (ATC). PROformance's product line includes all makes of remanufactured engines and select automatic transmissions. Their products are sold throughout the U.S. and are distributed by 4 regional distribution centers located around the country.

The parent company (ATC) and its operating unit (Aaron's) currently enjoy an excellent reputation within the OE community, yet because of the present opportunity to penetrate the \$1 billion independent aftermarket for remanufactured transmissions, PROformance has created the position of Technical Product Manager. The new Technical Product Manager will manage the aftermarket transmission product portfolio for the company by ensuring that the right product mix is offered at the right price and is manufactured and distributed at the right time.

## **The Company**

Aaron's Automotive originally started in business as an automatic transmission shop in 1959. Bob Wehr the founder soon expanded the company to 19 retail stores, scattered throughout the Midwest. Aaron's developed a comprehensive transmission remanufacturing process whereby transmissions were completely remanufactured to be as good as new. In 1983, Aaron's also began to remanufacture engines. Today the company primarily remanufactures transmissions for Chrysler, but also supplies engines to the independent aftermarket. In 2001 the brand name PROformance Powertrain Products was created to penetrate and capture a large share in the \$1 Billion independent aftermarket for transmissions as well as to continue gaining share in the independent aftermarket for remanufactured engines.

In 1994 Aftermarket Technology Corporation, a publicly traded company, (Symbol: ATAC) purchased Aaron's Automotive as part of a strategic initiative to establish a Drivetrain Remanufacturing Segment of their business. This segment primarily sells remanufactured transmissions directly to DaimlerChrysler, Ford, General Motors and several foreign owned OEM's. The products are primarily used as replacement parts by their domestic dealers during the warranty and post-warranty periods following the sale of a vehicle. In addition, the Drivetrain Remanufacturing segment sells select remanufactured and newly assembled engines to certain European OEM's including Ford's and General Motors's European operations and Jaguar. Today the segment revenues total over \$266 Million and consist of the following companies:

- Aaron's Automotive Products Inc. (Springfield, MO)
- Autocraft Industries (Oklahoma City, OK)
- Component Remanufacturing Specialists, Inc. (Gastonia, NC)
- Component Remanufacturing Specialists, Inc. (Mahwah, NJ)
- Autocraft Industries UK (Grantham, Lincolnshire, England)

Today Aaron's Automotive Products employs approximately 900 people within two non-union facilities. (a 268,300 square foot Westgate Road facility and a 240,000 square foot Airport Commerce Avenue facility) In addition to their remanufacturing facilities, the company maintains several core storage facilities in excess of 250,000 sq.ft. In 1997 the company received QS9000 certification, which it maintains today.

Currently 85% of the transmissions that the company sells through the PROformance brand name are sold to member shops within the AAMCO dealers association. A total of 650 member shops fall under this agreement. The remaining 15% are sold to warranty/insurance companies, fleets and distributors. Because of the Powertrain Groups extensive remanufacturing experience, the strength of their management team and the company wide focus on continuous improvement, the company plans on dominating the Powertrain Aftermarket. The Technical Product Manager will play a visibly key role throughout the

implementation of these plans. PROformance Powertrain Products anticipates on being the first to market with a nationwide aftermarket transmission program, which includes the following approaches:

- Warranty/Insurance (*AON, JM&A, Guardian, Warranty Gold, Ethos*)
- Traditional WD (*Merrill, NAPA, Carquest, Uni-Select, Auto Wares, Hahn Auto, UCI*)
- Retail WD (*Murray's, Autozone, PEP Boys, CSK, O'Reilly's, Advance*)
- Fleet (*Post Office, Taxi & Limo, Municipal, Utilities*)
- Specialty Repair (*Cottman, Firestone, Motorwork, Midas*)
- General Repair

The position of Technical Manager will report directly to Roger Borer - Director of Sales & Marketing for PROformance Powertrain. Roger was hired in the fall of 2002 and was formerly the Vice President of Sales for ITM engine components, a supplier of imported engine parts. Roger Borer reports to John Mitchem – Vice President of Aftermarket Operations for PROformance Powertrain. John was hired in the fall of 2001 and was formerly the General Manager of a \$200 million business unit of Honeywell (Bendix Brake Systems). Paul Komaromy is the President of Drivetrain Remanufacturing for ATC and Mike DuBose is the Chairman and CEO of ATC.

### **Technical Product Manager**

This position is responsible for managing the aftermarket transmission product portfolio to ensure that PROformance's product offering accurately reflects market demand, is properly priced and supports the company's business objectives. In addition the manager will implement a customer support process to effectively respond to product installation and vehicle application issues. The Technical Product Manager will also champion the process of sales, inventory and operations planning (SIOP) for aftermarket transmissions.

Until now, the Drivetrain Remanufacturing segment of ATC has focused primarily on growing and improving the “OE” sector of their business. However, with the significant opportunity that exists within the independent aftermarket for transmissions, it is important that the right candidate for this position have knowledge of transmission families, vehicle applications and aftermarket consolidations. This knowledge and “know how” is key to achieving the companies both short term and long term business objectives.

The right candidate will have previously worked within a cross functional team and will have interfaced with accounting departments, sales departments and other internal personnel in the development of market strategy, brand strategy and pricing/margin analysis. The candidate must be proven in the analysis of competitive data (price, product, sales volume), demographics and feature benefit summaries, in order for the company to offer comparative products that are competitively priced. Additionally, the Technical Product Manager will participate with Technical Support in the development and implementation of product demonstrations, training programs, printed materials and other projects.

Another area the Technical Product Manager will frequently interface with others in is managing the Aftermarket Transmission SIOP process and related meetings. This will include sales forecasting for use in production planning, manufacturing operations and inventory control. They will participate with accounting and production personnel to initiate “make” vs. “buy” decisions. Additionally, they will conduct “out of stock” and “do not build” analysis on collected order data, then participate in maintaining forward deployed inventory and fill rate.

This person will participate in trade show, end-use presentations so some travel can be expected.

Prior cataloging experience is required, as over the next 6-12 months this person will be charged with developing, assembling and maintaining the company’s aftermarket transmission catalog. This will require an ongoing review of part numbers, additions, deletions and consolidations.

Developing an internal process to ensure that customer inquiries concerning application and technical issues are addressed on a timely basis will go a long way towards “adding value” to the PROformance brand name.

## **Professional Qualifications**

### **EDUCATION:**

Knowledge at a level normally acquired through completion of a Bachelor’s degree in Automotive Engineering or Marketing in order to acquire the technical background necessary to perform assigned tasks. ASE certification is highly desirable.

### **EXPERIENCE:**

Minimum 5 - 10 years in the automotive aftermarket with emphasis on technical knowledge of transmission families, applications and consolidations. Experience in transmission rebuilding or remanufacturing would be considered very complimentary.

### **SKILLS AND ABILITIES:**

- Strong oral and written communication skills
- Expert knowledge of transmission families, applications, and aftermarket consolidations
- Knowledge of product engineering, quality and inventory control principles
- Solid analytical and presentation skills
- Knowledge of lean, six sigma, continuous improvement or other process-based total quality tools
- High energy level, comfortable performing multi-faceted projects in conjunction with normal activities

- Strong level of interpersonal skills necessary in order to interact effectively with internal and external customers
- Demonstrates self-initiative. Capable of functioning with minimal direction
- High degree of computer literacy – Excel, Word, PowerPoint
- Willingness to travel to various ATC and customer facilities

### **Compensation**

The official salary range of this position is in the process of being determined. A comprehensive benefit & relocation package is provided.

### **The Locale**

It is probable that the candidate has enjoyed living in a locale similar to Springfield, Missouri. Maybe the person grew up in or lived in Missouri or an adjoining state. Regardless, they must value the quality of life of “Main Street, America” as a place to live.

With its proximity to Branson and location among the Ozark Mountains, Springfield (pop. 564,429) – Missouri’s third-largest city – has always served as a gateway city and tourist destination. 5 million visitors come to the region annually. Springfield is a paradise to those who enjoy fishing, hiking, boating and golfing. The city has also long served as the cultural center of the Ozarks, supporting it’s own ballet and opera companies as well as community theatre, an art museum and a symphony.

Two nationally recognized hospitals that have been rated within the Top 100 by “Modern Healthcare” magazine call Springfield their home. A cost of living index that is nearly 10% below the national average. A pleasant climate. These are some additional reasons why someone should consider Springfield as there next home.

Springfield has been quoted as:

- 9<sup>th</sup> best place to live and work - “Employment Review” May 2001
- Ranked 63<sup>rd</sup> in job growth, earned income and future growth – “Forbes” May 2001
- Listed as a five-star community for quality of life – “Expansion Management” May 2001
- Home of a blue-ribbon school system – “Expansion Management” 2000

Lordstone Corporation is an international consulting firm specializing in recruitment and business research. Our client is an equal opportunity employer and does not discriminate on the basis of race, age, color, religion, sex, ethnic or national origin, or physical handicap.

If you know someone who meets most or all of the requirements described in this brochure, please feel free to suggest that person for consideration.

We fully respect the need for confidentiality of information supplied by interested parties and assure them that their backgrounds and interests will not be discussed with anyone, including our clients, without their prior consent.

For further information on, or consideration for this position, please contact:

#### CONTACT INFORMATION

Jeff Ketchum  
Managing Partner  
Lordstone Corporation

Gladstone, Michigan, USA  
Akland, Norway

Tel: 906 428 9300  
eFax: 248 598 1900  
Web: [www.lordstone.us](http://www.lordstone.us)