

BRITISH MOTOR TRADE ASSOCIATION

While some have predicted the demise of the classic British car industry in America, there are clear indicators that the industry is not only doing fine, but has many opportunities to thrive and even expand. The industry has grown from small importers in the post-war period to large distribution networks in the 1960s and 1970s. With the demise of many British brands in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the industry shrank and began a shift from factory-supported parts and repair businesses to independent businesses. This first step in the evolution from factories to independents has matured to a point where the next step naturally follows: An organized, interdependent effort by

independent businesses in the British car trade to ensure the long-term viability of the industry. This effort led to the formation of the *British Motor Trade Association* in March, 2003.

How big is the British Motor Trade in America? Because many British-based motor trade businesses are small, this market is widely misunderstood and greatly underestimated. It is often mistakenly considered insignificant. However, research in the late 1980s indicated there were still 130,000

MGBs registered in the US. Add in other models of MGs, Triumphs, Austin Healey's, Jaguars, and other marques and there are easily more than 200,000 British cars still on the road or under restoration. It is reasonable to expect an expenditure of \$500-1000 per car per year, making the British Motor Trade a \$100-200 Million industry.

Many of the businesses involved in the British Motor Trade are small, employing less than ten people. Because of these small sizes, these businesses have trouble finding the time or other resources to devote to the research, training and marketing that would help them expand or improve their business. Many have perfected several aspects of their business to provide top-quality products or services, only to find they have little time or no good venue to show potential customers their capabilities. For many years, these businesses have struggled in spite of their successes because they have not had a good network of resources to draw upon.

The *British Motor Trade Association* is that network. It was formed to draw the three aspects of the business—the "Trade Triangle"—together to cooperatively promote and improve the British car ownership experience and therefore improve business.

www.britcar.org

British Motor Trade Association Mission

- To promote the British car as a safe, reliable, and delightful vehicle worthy of enjoyment and investment.
- To develop business-to-business collaboration that promotes quality, knowledge, business expansion, and explores emerging markets.

The British Trade Triangle is composed of:

- **Suppliers:** Parts manufacturers and rebuilders. Parts wholesalers and retailers. These form the foundation of products that businesses need to support their work. In addition to their retail customers, they need shops to purchase products from them and help them develop new products or improve existing products. They need magazines and events to advertise and promote their products.
- **Shops:** Repair shops. Restoration shops. Dealers. These repair and restoration shops keep the cars running and in desirable condition. Dealers bring new people into the hobby. They need good parts manufacturers and rebuilders and they also need magazines and events to advertise and promote their products and services.
- **Media:** Magazines (club and professional) and Event Organizers (club and professional). Probably the most underutilized area of the triangle, these businesses and clubs provide venues to bring excitement, education, and innovation to this hobby. With support from suppliers in the way of technical information, new product announcements, advertising, sponsorships and other cross-promotions, the media can help springboard good ideas into successful products and services.

Formed after the 1st British Motor Trade Conference at University Motors in Ada, Michigan in 2003, the BMTA now has about 100 members from the US and Canada.

Membership benefits include:

- > **Preferred Pricing with several vendors**
- > **Complimentary Subscriptions to several magazines**
- > **Quarterly Newsletters**
- > **A growing website which features**
 - **Members-only message board for advice and discussion**
 - **Downloadable BMTA marketing materials**
 - **Product quality reports from manufacturers and vendors**
 - **Comprehensive listing of member information**
 - **Group advertising in magazines and events**
 - **A network of helpful business owners**