



Stoneridge



DELIVERING THE DIGITAL SOLUTION: INNOVATION...DEVELOPMENT...SUPPORT

Stoneridge Electronics



In association with
MotorTransport



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The past, the present and the future...

Stoneridge is 60 years old this July. *Motor Transport* finds out more about the firm from its managing director, Mark Jenkins.



On 25 July there will be a major celebration in Dundee as tachograph manufacturer Stoneridge marks its 60th anniversary. There will be a party with a band, and visitors from its US parent company.

The celebration is well deserved as the company has come a long way since it started in Dundee in 1948. Today it is increasing its market share and transforming its product line-up to meet the new digital age.

It started as a component manufacturer and moved into the tachograph business in the mid 1970s. In those days it was known as Veeder-Root, but now it is part of the giant US company Stoneridge.

"In the past, one manufacturer has dominated the market with a share of around 85%," says Mark Jenkins, Stoneridge managing director. "Now

we have moved into the digital arena, we have moved ahead strongly and there is a more even split between the two. We reckon that we hold around 40% of the digital market."

Key clients

This has been achieved by focusing on the truck manufacturers. All Scania trucks are fitted with Stoneridge tachographs and companies such as Daimler, MAN and DAF are taking an increasing number. "There has been a sea-change in the market," says Jenkins. "We have been working with the manufacturers for some time and we are now seeing the fruit of that work."

This helps Stoneridge because the more its tachographs are in vehicles, the more likely customers are to buy Stoneridge if they need replacements. "It is a growing market," he adds.

The company is certainly doing well, Jenkins explains: "We have a robust five-year strategic plan and

our sales have virtually doubled in three years. We had a plan to double sales in five years and we have done it two years early. That is tremendous."

While the company makes tachographs, the Dundee-based business is more involved with the support and back-up, as well as developing new products. The company does not provide a bureau analysis service: "We make easy-to-use equipment that enables customers to analyse the tachograph data, we try to empower our clients, giving them control of their information," Jenkins states.

"We make a wide variety of tachograph products, both digital and analogue. We can provide equipment to take the data out of the tachographs, and analyse the data. We provide equipment for both fleets and owner-drivers. We help customers to ensure that they are compliant with the law."

Driver training

The other major area is training, and Stoneridge re-educates drivers and gets them used to digital tachos. How long does it take to train a driver to be able to use digital tachographs? "It depends on what we are trying to get the driver to do," he explains. "If it is a simple case of understanding how to use digital tachographs, it is only a couple of hours. And we can explain fully about moving away from analogue and understanding all the different menus. We also offer multi-day training for workshop



THROUGH THE AGES: Veeder-Root's Kilspindle Rd factory in 1982 (left); Stoneridge's modern Dundee HQ (above).



Photograph: DC Thomson & Co Ltd

NOT JUST DUNDEE

US parent Stoneridge is based in Warren, Ohio, and in 2007 posted a turnover of \$727.1m (£368.6m) and a net income of \$16.7m (£8.5m), up 14.9%. It employs approximately 5,600 people and has 20 manufacturing and design centres and 18 sales and engineering support offices around the world, including: Brazil, China, Estonia, France, Germany, India, Japan, Mexico, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the US.

fitters and enforcement authorities, as well as courses tailored to a specific audience."

It is a big change. Many operators used to put their paper tachographs on a nail and they would stay there until VOSA or the police wanted to see them. Now you can use the information. More transport businesses are now analysing their data and using the information.

"With digital, you can do so many different things with the data," says Jenkins. "You can plot whatever you like on a graph; you can analyse your operation using the tachographs."

And this means more control. More control means greater efficiency – the holy grail of transport.

THE FUTURE

During 2009, Stoneridge will unveil a new product. This will enable operators to download the digital tachograph's data while the truck is in motion. Currently a vehicle has to be stationary before the data can be transmitted back to base. This is particularly useful when vehicles are away from base a long time and data needs to be downloaded. "We will be able to take the data out of the tachographs while it is in use and present it to the owner or fleet manager in whatever form they want. It is not expensive and marks a new level in tachograph technology," states Jenkins.

CHANGES: The analogue production line in 1991 (below, left); Stoneridge's up-to-date service centre (below, right).



Photograph: DC Thomson & Co Ltd



1948:
Warner Brothers shows first colour newsreel; Veeder-Root opens site in Dundee...

1964
The Sun newspaper is launched; workforce of 700 produces 5,000 counting devices a month...

1973
First mobile phone call made; the UK joins the EEC opening up a huge market for tachographs...

1974
'Blazing Saddles' released; Veeder-Root introduces the '1100' mechanical tachograph...

Focusing on the customer



Case study: Gregory Distribution

Gregory Distribution uses the Stoneridge OPTAC² tachograph analysis system and is very pleased with the software, hardware and support provided by Stoneridge.

With more than 800 drivers and over half its fleet of 400 trucks already fitted with digital tachographs, Gregory Distribution is keen to move to an all-digital-tachograph fleet as soon as possible.

"We have a very large fleet and the cost for us to do the analysis through an outside agency would be significant, so we wanted an in-house system where we can control those costs," says Paul Willis, driver training manager. "We wanted to be able to obtain information from the system that not only provides the drivers' hours data, but that can help the business to go forward."

He adds: "What we wanted was a system that we could utilise and develop with the supplier to our benefit. Stoneridge has made quite a few changes for us over the past few years to improve and tailor the system to our requirements."

"Introducing the tachograph analysis software has been very interesting. Initially, we had some problems, but Stoneridge provided very good back-up and support. We have worked with them very closely and continue to do so."

MT talks to Stuart Adams, Stoneridge's fleet support manager, about customer support and feedback.

Many suppliers to the road transport industry talk about customer care. Judging by Stuart Adams' passion, Stoneridge walks the talk with 97% of its customers being satisfied with its service.

As fleet support manager, he's head of customer support, primarily concerned with fleet operators – and he takes an interesting line to start with: "Our primary concern is to support our OPTAC range of tachograph analysis products that help the fleet meet its legal obligations and protect its O-licence."

"I think customers want a clarity of understanding from reports that will really help them manage their driver and vehicle activity data, but also the reassurance of a dedicated customer support team to answer any questions."

Market understanding

"Something we pride ourselves on is that we do not presume to know exactly what our customers require. As a tachograph manufacturer, we understand the needs of the market, but a lot of my time is spent obtaining

feedback from customers and ensuring that our products remain fresh and of real benefit to them."

He adds: "It is a bit of a cliché, but my job really starts when the deal has been done. I want to ensure that our customer service and support is as good as possible."

Adams manages a team of 18 to support fleet customers. They are divided into two teams: first line customer and second line technical support. The customer support lines are open from 8am to 4.30pm, Monday to Friday. The teams handle calls from not only the UK, but also Stoneridge's fleet customers based in France, Spain, Germany, Italy, Sweden and the Netherlands.

"Of course all our fleet software products come with user manuals and we have tried to make our quick guides as clear as possible for the customer. With our Fleet Viewer product, our intention is that you can take the CD out of the box, install the software and be operational as quickly as possible," he explains. Nevertheless, sometimes customers

EASY COMMERCE

If you don't want to order by phone or in person, you can of course order online by clicking on www.optac.info/uk/. You can view and purchase Stoneridge's product portfolio, as well as making use of three useful links:

- The Law & You: a guide to how digital tachographs will change the way you manage your driver and vehicle activity data.
- Choose OPTAC: more information on the OPTAC hardware and software range, and an online demonstration.
- Support: product support information, FAQs and Fleet Viewer software upgrade download.



ACHIEVING EXCELLENCE: fleet support manager Stuart Adams

SERVICE NETWORK

Of course technical support is not only available over the phone: face-to-face is possible in any of the 350-plus service centres in Stoneridge's UK network. All are VOSA-approved for tachograph installation and calibration. Here's the breakdown by region:

● East Midlands	26
● East of England	37
● North East	17
● North West	39
● Northern Ireland	16
● Scotland	43
● South East	50
● South West	42
● Wales	18
● West Midlands	51
● Yorkshire & The Humber	29

www.stoneridgeelectronics.info/service.aspx provides the full list.

want to be talked through the process: "Because of the legislative nature of the product, people like to phone up and interact with a member of staff. We talk them through the process of how to download from the vehicle unit, and the drivers' cards."

When people call the support line, there is a very good chance the

FLEET PREMIER CLUB

Stoneridge operates a Fleet Premier Club. Members are eligible for tachographs at a special fixed price at any UK Stoneridge distributor. All tachographs come with a two-year unlimited mileage warranty. Club members also get preferential service, reducing vehicle downtime.

problem is solved first time. "We want people to get back working as soon as possible," Adams says.

First-time problem solvers

Of course, to achieve that Stoneridge has to employ appropriately trained staff. "For example, all the members of the technical support team are qualified tachograph fitters: they've all sat and passed the VOSA approved tachograph workshop technicians' course," he reveals.

Adams concludes: "Our customers are in many ways our greatest supporters, but in other ways they are our greatest critics as well. It is our customers who help shape our products and it is their needs that will drive the company."

Case study: Greenman Municipal

West Bromwich-based Greenman Municipal installs and calibrates tachographs. "It is a niche market, one of those things that you can't just pop down the road and get your tachographs done," explains managing director Richard Rutherford.

During his early career, he noticed "that there is a need for somebody to be a specialist in tachographs. My idea was to get into it and give the customer a premier service – because when your tachograph goes down, your vehicle is off the road."

Rutherford explains that his business is not so much driven by tachographs being unreliable, but rather by abuse (not necessarily deliberate) of tachographs: "Drivers don't get in and rip a tacho head to pieces, it is just one of those things. They get damaged and every two years have to be tested. Similarly, with digital tachographs, it's a recalibration every two years."

The introduction of digital tachographs meant a learning process for his staff: "It was a new field altogether, a lot of things to learn and a completely new operating procedure to go through."

Rutherford explains Greenman's relationship with Stoneridge: "We do a lot of business with Stoneridge. We buy a lot of heads from them. And we use their calibration equipment. I have to say I find Stoneridge to be a market leader; no-one can beat them on service."

He also rates Stoneridge's back-up, particularly when retrofitting: "Its technical side is great. You pick the phone up and you get an answer straight away. Other firms are not always quite so easy to get in touch with."



1984

Torvill and Dean win gold at Winter Olympics; the '1400' electronic tachograph is introduced...

1989

Berlin Wall comes down; Veeder-Root introduces the second-generation '8300' tachograph...

1991

Michael Schumacher makes his F1 debut; Veeder-Root introduces the '8400' tachograph...

1999

Lance Armstrong wins his first Tour de France; company bought by Stoneridge Electronics...

Product portfolio

2400 Tachograph

Stoneridge states: "If you are looking for a Tachograph that simply does the job, day in and day out, then the 2400 Tachograph is your answer." It has an illuminated drawer for easy insertion of charts; the drawer itself is stronger with greater resistance and so is less susceptible to damage. It's compatible with a wide range of vehicles and comes with a variety of speed scales, 12v or 24v options, LCD colour and facia designs. It's backed by a two-year unlimited mileage warranty.



8400 Tachograph

Stoneridge describes the 8400 as the "most reliable and high-quality conventional tachograph on the market", offering "outstanding value for money". Like the 2400 series, the 8400 comes with a two-year unlimited mileage warranty. There is also a range of fourth-stylus models to record engine revs or events. There is a range of models to fit all vehicle applications.



SE5000 Digital Tachograph

The SE5000 is a prime example of innovative digital tachograph technology in use. It complies with Annex 1b of EC Legislation at the same time as setting new standards in performance, design and technology. Its robust card reader system and manual card ejection create higher reliability and, combined with the lifelong battery, increase the overall performance of the tachograph. It also benefits from a simple paper loading system, making the driver's job easier. Finally, during manual entries, the local time is shown in the display and together with the presence of complete country naming, easily-made mistakes are greatly reduced.



OPTAC FLEET VIEWER

The OPTAC Fleet Viewer is aimed at operators with smaller fleets and owner-drivers. It allows the user to download, store and view all activities. The software allows the user to: set up download reminders; back up and archive data; see and print seven days of activity either by driver or vehicle; export data; and delete historical data that is no longer required. It comes with the award-winning OPTAC download tool, famous for the hat trick of awards it picked up at the Design Business Association Awards recently, including the prestigious Grand Prix which honours companies who best demonstrate how an effective design strategy has made a real difference to their business. The tool has just four buttons, is mobile and can store data from up to 20 tachographs or 500 smartcards.

OPTAC+

OPTAC+ is aimed at fleet operators with digital tachographs only. It has all the benefits of the OPTAC Fleet Viewer package, including the download tool, plus the ability to analyse data against Drivers' Hours Regulations and the Working Time Directive. Other analysis available includes infringement reports, and fuel consumption and fleet management reports.

OPTAC²

OPTAC² is aimed at fleet operators with a mixture of analogue and digital tachographs. It has all the benefits of the OPTAC Fleet Viewer package, including the download tool, plus the ability to analyse data against Drivers' Hours Regulations and the Working Time Directive. Other analysis available includes infringement reports, and fuel consumption and fleet management reports. OPTAC² also comes with the Scan4 Chart Scanner, which can scan a wax chart in three seconds.



Digital Tachograph/Retrofit Kits

To convert analogue vehicles to digital, Stoneridge offers this retrofit kit, which includes the SE5000 Digital Tachograph, speedo, sensor, harness and sealing shroud. If you can't fit a digital tachograph to a fleet of vehicles due to gearbox constraints, then Stoneridge would like to hear from you, with a view to helping find a legal solution.

Electronic Road Speed Limiter

The ERSL is EU-approved, backed by a two-year warranty and helps operators reduce fuel consumption and vehicle maintenance costs. It comes with a universal fitment for drive-by-wire vehicles.

CITO Download Tool

This hand-held, compact data collection unit is designed for use in workshops, whether downloading data from the vehicle unit or the workshop smartcard. It can store data from up to 20 tachographs or 500 smartcards. With an LCD menu screen, it's a simple way to keep track of records. It works with any type-approved digital tachograph or smartcard. It comes with easy-to-use, wizard-driven software, which meets all

your legal requirements, including: secure storage of data in an inspection-suitable format; electronic storage of calibration and certificate details; and the ability to provide requested data to the fleet operator.

9500 Series Rolling Road

Stoneridge describes the 9500 Series Rolling Road as "easy to use and virtually maintenance-free", with all wiring and sensors being integrated. Features include a safe drive on/off pneumatic system, a rigid wraparound frame and a floor-mounted console. It can handle up to 15 tonnes per axle up to 100kmph; it is compatible with all current analogue and digital tachographs; and is accurate to within 0.1% from 1,000 pulses per rev encoder.

On-Board Load Indicator

With excess load fines of up to £5,000, load monitors like this are increasingly popular. The Stoneridge On-Board Load Indicator monitors a vehicle's load continuously; the LCD display shows the weight on both front and rear axles as well as the combined weight using a 'traffic light' system of warning indicators as the limit is

approached. Other features include tamper-proof password protection function and customisation options. The On-Board Load Indicator from Stoneridge is suitable for a wide range of vehicle applications.

MKII Tachograph Programmer

Stoneridge describes the MKII as "the industry standard. It offers unrivalled reliability with accurate programming and calibration for all makes of electronic tachographs." The MKII is a hand-held device, so it can be used for in-cab calibration and testing (including determining a vehicle's W-factor, performing tachograph bench tests and altering tachograph K-Factor settings).

Wireless Smoke Meter

The Wireless Smoke Meter operates on an exclusive radio frequency, relaying information from the smokehead to the display unit. The portable display unit can be used up to 100m from the smokehead. It is approved for Class 4, Class 7, HGV, PSV, RPC and SVA vehicles. It also boasts rapid warm-up and a robust design meaning it can withstand temperatures as low as -15°C.

CHARTING THE FUTURE

While there are many operators having to manage the migration from analogue to digital, Stoneridge engineering project manager Graeme Mays needs to be a couple of steps ahead of the market.

"Managers want to extract more and more information from tachographs; they want to be compliant and they want to improve productivity. So, remote downloading of live data will be the key demand in the future," he says.

Indeed, Stoneridge is already working towards solving this, but he notes that there may be some legislative concerns for the industry to overcome first: the industry will need to prove that in transmitting live data from trucks back to a server at HQ that there is no corruption (accidental or deliberate) of the information.

Developments that might affect tachographs in the future centre around changes to exemption rules: namely electric vehicles and the sub-3.5t market. "Electric vehicles don't fall within the rules, but they are now more powerful, with far greater ranges," notes

Mays. "I also think tacho rules may be extended to 2.8t vans."

With one eye on the present and the other on the future, Mays says: "Digital tachographs are a new market; we've had analogue for 30 years. We've not even seen the beginning of what this technology can achieve."

So what's in the pipeline? For obvious reasons, Mays is scant on detail; however, he allows: "We're always working on future generations of tachographs and we'll continue to explore joint venture opportunities on non-tachograph products."



2003

First UK recording of temperature above 100°F; Stoneridge moves to Claverhouse industrial estate...

2004

'Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King' wins 11 Oscars; Stoneridge sets up multi-lingual customer helpline...

2006

Smoking in public places banned in Scotland; Stoneridge introduces OPTAC™ download tools...

2008

Beijing will host 2008 Olympics Stoneridge Electronics celebrates 60 years in Dundee



Stoneridge – Setting the standard
Manufacturers of VEEDER-ROOT Tachographs



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