

SNAP-ON Inc
Form 10-K
February 12, 2015
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UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

Washington, D.C. 20549

FORM 10-K

x ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934
For the fiscal year ended January 3, 2015, or

.. TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE ACT OF 1934
Commission File Number 1-7724

(Exact name of registrant as specified in its charter)

Delaware
(State of incorporation)

39-0622040
(I.R.S. Employer Identification No.)

2801 80th Street, Kenosha, Wisconsin
(Address of principal executive offices)

(262) 656-5200

53143
(Zip code)

(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(b) of the Act:

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Title of each class	Name of each exchange on which registered
Common stock, \$1.00 par value	New York Stock Exchange
Securities registered pursuant to Section 12(g) of the Act: None	

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is a well-known seasoned issuer, as defined in Rule 405 of the Securities Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark if the registrant is not required to file reports pursuant to Section 13 or 15(d) of the Act. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant (1) has filed all reports required to be filed by Section 13 or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to file such reports), and (2) has been subject to such filing requirements for the past 90 days. Yes No

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant has submitted electronically and posted on its corporate Web site, if any, every Interactive Data File required to be submitted and posted pursuant to Rule 405 of Regulation S-T (§232.405 of this chapter) during the preceding 12 months (or for such shorter period that the registrant was required to submit and post such files). Yes No

Indicate by check mark if disclosure of delinquent filers pursuant to Item 405 of Regulation S-K (§229.405 of this chapter) is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of registrant's knowledge, in a definitive proxy or information statement incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a large accelerated filer, an accelerated filer, a non-accelerated filer, or a smaller reporting company. See the definitions of large accelerated filer, accelerated filer and smaller reporting company in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large accelerated filer Accelerated filer Non-accelerated filer Smaller reporting company

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act). Yes No

The aggregate market value of voting and non-voting common equity held by non-affiliates (excludes 382,563 shares held by directors and executive officers) computed by reference to the price (\$118.65) at which common equity was last sold as of the last business day of the registrant's most recently completed second fiscal quarter (June 27, 2014) was \$6.8 billion.

The number of shares of Common Stock (\$1.00 par value) of the registrant outstanding as of February 6, 2015, was 58,124,176 shares.

DOCUMENTS INCORPORATED BY REFERENCE

Part III of this Annual Report on Form 10-K incorporates by reference certain information that will be set forth in Snap-on's Proxy Statement, which is expected to first be mailed to shareholders on or about March 12, 2015, prepared for the Annual Meeting of Shareholders scheduled for April 30, 2015.

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PART I

Safe Harbor

Statements in this document that are not historical facts, including statements that (i) are in the future tense; (ii) include the words expects, plans, targets, estimates, believes, anticipates, or similar words that reference Snap-on Incorporated (Snap-on or the company) or its management; (iii) are specifically identified as forward-looking; or (iv) describe Snap-on s or management s future outlook, plans, estimates, objectives or goals, are forward-looking statements within the meaning of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Snap-on cautions the reader that any forward-looking statements included in this document that are based upon assumptions and estimates were developed by management in good faith and are subject to risks, uncertainties or other factors that could cause (and in some cases have caused) actual results to differ materially from those described in any such statement. Accordingly, forward-looking statements should not be relied upon as a prediction of actual results or regarded as a representation by the company or its management that the projected results will be achieved. For those forward-looking statements, Snap-on cautions the reader that numerous important factors, such as those listed below, as well as those factors discussed in this Annual Report on Form 10-K, particularly those in Item 1A: Risk Factors, could affect the company s actual results and could cause its actual consolidated results to differ materially from those expressed in any forward-looking statement made by, or on behalf of, Snap-on.

These risks and uncertainties include, without limitation, uncertainties related to estimates, statements, assumptions and projections generally, and the timing and progress with which Snap-on can attain value through its Snap-on Value Creation Processes, including its ability to realize efficiencies and savings from its rapid continuous improvement and other cost reduction initiatives, improve workforce productivity, achieve improvements in the company s manufacturing footprint and greater efficiencies in its supply chain, and enhance machine maintenance, plant productivity and manufacturing line set-up and change-over practices, any or all of which could result in production inefficiencies, higher costs and/or lost revenues. These risks also include uncertainties related to Snap-on s capability to implement future strategies with respect to its existing businesses, its ability to refine its brand and franchise strategies, retain and attract franchisees, further enhance service and value to franchisees and thereby help improve their sales and profitability, introduce successful new products, successfully pursue, complete and integrate acquisitions, as well as its ability to withstand disruption arising from natural disasters, planned facility closures or other labor interruptions, the effects of external negative factors, including adverse developments in world financial markets, weakness in certain areas of the global economy, and significant changes in the current competitive environment, inflation, interest rates and other monetary and market fluctuations, changes in tax rates and regulations, and the impact of energy and raw material supply and pricing, including steel and gasoline, the amount, rate and growth of Snap-on s general and administrative expenses, including health care and postretirement costs (resulting from, among other matters, U.S. health care legislation and its implementation), continuing and potentially increasing required contributions to pension and postretirement plans, the impacts of non-strategic business and/or product line rationalizations, and the effects on business as a result of new legislation, regulations or government-related developments or issues, risks associated with data security and technological systems and protections, and other world or local events outside Snap-on s control, including terrorist disruptions. Snap-on disclaims any responsibility to update any forward-looking statement provided in this document, except as required by law.

In addition, investors should be aware that generally accepted accounting principles in the United States of America (U.S. GAAP) prescribe when a company should reserve for particular risks, including litigation exposures. Accordingly, results for a given reporting period could be significantly affected if and when a reserve is established for a major contingency. Reported results, therefore, may appear to be volatile in certain accounting periods.

Snap-on s fiscal year ends on the Saturday that is on or nearest to December 31. Unless otherwise indicated, references in this document to fiscal 2014 or 2014 refer to the fiscal year ended January 3, 2015; references to fiscal 2013 or 2013 refer to the fiscal year ended December 28, 2013 and references to fiscal 2012 or 2012 refer to the fiscal year ended December 29, 2012. Snap-on s 2014 fiscal year contained 53 weeks of operating results, with the extra week occurring in the fourth quarter; Snap-on s 2013 and 2012 fiscal years each contained 52 weeks of operating results. References in this document to 2014, 2013 and 2012 year end refer to January 3, 2015, December 28, 2013, and December 29, 2012, respectively.

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Item 1: Business

Snap-on was incorporated under the laws of the state of Wisconsin in 1920 and reincorporated under the laws of the state of Delaware in 1930. Snap-on is a leading global innovator, manufacturer and marketer of tools, equipment, diagnostics, repair information and systems solutions for professional users performing critical tasks. Products and services include hand and power tools, tool storage, diagnostics software, information and management systems, shop equipment and other solutions for vehicle dealerships and repair centers, as well as for customers in industries, including aviation and aerospace, agriculture, construction, government and military, mining, natural resources, power generation and technical education. Snap-on also derives income from various financing programs designed to facilitate the sales of its products.

Snap-on markets its products and brands through multiple sales distribution channels in more than 130 countries. Snap-on's largest geographic markets include the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Germany, Australia, Japan, France, Italy, Sweden, Spain, China, Brazil, the Netherlands, Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Argentina, Denmark, Norway, India, the Russian Federation, Finland and Indonesia. Snap-on reaches its customers through the company's franchisee, company-direct, distributor and internet channels. Snap-on originated the mobile tool distribution channel in the automotive repair market.

The company began with the development of the original Snap-on interchangeable socket set in 1920 and subsequently pioneered mobile tool distribution in the automotive repair market, where fully stocked vans sell to professional vehicle technicians at their place of business. For many decades, the company was viewed primarily as a hand tool company selling through vans to vehicle technicians. Today, Snap-on defines its value proposition more broadly, extending its reach beyond the garage to deliver a broad array of unique solutions that make work easier for serious professionals performing critical tasks. Building upon capabilities already demonstrated in the automotive repair arena, the company's coherent growth strategy focuses on developing and expanding its professional customer base in adjacent markets, additional geographies and other areas, including in critical industries, where the cost and penalties for failure can be high. In addition to its coherent growth strategy, Snap-on is committed to its Value Creation Processes—a set of strategic principles and processes designed to create value and employed in the areas of (i) safety; (ii) quality; (iii) customer connection; (iv) innovation; and (v) rapid continuous improvement (RCI).

Snap-on's primary customer segments include: (i) commercial and industrial customers, including professionals in critical industries and emerging markets; (ii) professional vehicle repair technicians who purchase products through the company's worldwide mobile tool distribution network; and (iii) other professional customers related to vehicle repair, including owners and managers of independent and original equipment manufacturer (OEM) dealership service and repair shops (OEM dealerships). Snap-on's Financial Services customer segment includes: (i) franchisees' customers and Snap-on's industrial and other customers who require financing for the purchase or lease of tools and diagnostics and equipment products on an extended-term payment plan; and (ii) franchisees who require financing for business loans and vehicle leases.

Snap-on's business segments are based on the organization structure used by management for making operating and investment decisions and for assessing performance. Snap-on's reportable business segments are: (i) the Commercial & Industrial Group; (ii) the Snap-on Tools Group; (iii) the Repair Systems & Information Group; and (iv) Financial Services. The Commercial & Industrial Group consists of business operations serving a broad range of industrial and commercial customers worldwide, primarily through direct and distributor channels. The Snap-on Tools Group consists of business operations primarily serving vehicle service and repair technicians through the company's worldwide mobile tool distribution channel. The Repair Systems & Information Group consists of business operations serving other professional vehicle repair customers worldwide, primarily owners and managers of independent repair shops and OEM dealerships, through direct and distributor channels. Financial Services consists of the business operations of Snap-on Credit LLC (SOC), the company's financial services business in the United States, and Snap-on's other financial services subsidiaries in those international markets where Snap-on has franchise operations. See Note 18 to the Consolidated Financial Statements for information on business segments and foreign operations.

Snap-on evaluates the performance of its operating segments based on segment revenues, including both external and intersegment net sales, and segment operating earnings. Snap-on accounts for intersegment sales and transfers based primarily on standard costs with reasonable mark-ups established between the segments. Identifiable assets by segment are those assets used in the respective reportable segment's operations. Corporate assets consist of cash and cash equivalents (excluding cash held at Financial Services), deferred income taxes and certain other assets. All significant intersegment amounts are eliminated to arrive at Snap-on's consolidated financial results.

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On May 28, 2014, Snap-on acquired substantially all of the assets of Pro-Cut International, Inc. (Pro-Cut) for a cash purchase price of \$41.3 million. Pro-Cut designs, manufactures and distributes on-car brake lathes, related equipment

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and accessories used in brake servicing by automotive repair facilities. The acquisition of the Pro-Cut product line complemented and increased Snap-on's existing undercar equipment product offering, broadened its established capabilities in serving vehicle repair facilities and expanded the company's presence with repair shop owners and managers. For segment reporting purposes, the results of operations and assets of Pro-Cut have been included in the Repair Systems & Information Group since the date of acquisition. Pro forma financial information has not been presented as the net effects of the Pro-Cut acquisition were neither significant nor material to Snap-on's results of operations or financial position.

On May 13, 2013, Snap-on acquired Challenger Lifts, Inc. (Challenger) for a cash purchase price of \$38.2 million. Challenger designs, manufactures and distributes a comprehensive line of vehicle lifts and accessories to a diverse customer base in the automotive repair sector. The acquisition of the Challenger vehicle lift product line complemented and increased Snap-on's existing undercar equipment product offering, broadened its established capabilities in serving vehicle repair facilities and expanded the company's presence with repair shop owners and managers. For segment reporting purposes, the results of operations and assets of Challenger have been included in the Repair Systems & Information Group since the date of acquisition. Pro forma financial information has not been presented as the net effects of the Challenger acquisition were neither significant nor material to Snap-on's results of operations or financial position.

Information Available on the Company's Website

Additional information regarding Snap-on and its products is available on the company's website at www.snapon.com. Snap-on is not including the information contained on its website as a part of, or incorporating it by reference into, this Annual Report on Form 10-K. Snap-on's Annual Reports on Form 10-K, Quarterly Reports on Form 10-Q, Proxy Statements on Schedule 14A and Current Reports on Form 8-K, as well as any amendments to those reports, are made available to the public at no charge, other than an investor's own internet access charges, through the Investor Information section of the company's website at www.snapon.com. Snap-on makes such material available on its website as soon as reasonably practicable after it electronically files such material with, or furnishes it to, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC). Copies of any materials the company files with the SEC can also be obtained free of charge through the SEC's website at www.sec.gov. The SEC's Public Reference Room can be contacted at 100 F Street, N.E., Washington, D.C. 20549, or by calling 1-800-732-0330. In addition, Snap-on's (i) charters for the Audit, Corporate Governance and Nominating, and Organization and Executive Compensation Committees of the company's Board of Directors; (ii) Corporate Governance Guidelines; and (iii) Code of Business Conduct and Ethics are available on the company's website. Snap-on will also post any amendments to these documents, or information about any waivers granted to directors or executive officers with respect to the Code of Business Conduct and Ethics, on the company's website at www.snapon.com.

Products and Services

Tools, Diagnostics and Repair Information, and Equipment

Snap-on offers a broad line of products and complementary services that are grouped into three product categories: (i) tools; (ii) diagnostics and repair information; and (iii) equipment. Further product line information is not presented as it is not practicable to do so. The following table shows the consolidated net sales of these product categories for the last three years:

<i>(Amounts in millions)</i>	2014	Net Sales 2013	2012
Product Category:			
Tools	\$ 1,868.5	\$ 1,743.3	\$ 1,729.4
Diagnostics and repair information	689.5	652.0	619.8
Equipment	719.7	661.2	588.7
	\$ 3,277.7	\$ 3,056.5	\$ 2,937.9

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The *tools* product category includes hand tools, power tools and tool storage products. Hand tools include wrenches, sockets, ratchet wrenches, pliers, screwdrivers, punches and chisels, saws and cutting tools, pruning tools, torque measuring instruments and other similar products. Power tools include cordless (battery), pneumatic (air), hydraulic and corded (electric) tools, such as impact wrenches, ratchets, chisels, drills, sanders, grinders, polishers and similar products. Tool storage includes tool chests, roll cabinets, tool control systems and other similar products. The majority of products are manufactured by Snap-on and, in completing the product offering, other items are purchased from external manufacturers.

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The *diagnostics and repair information* product category includes handheld and PC-based diagnostic products, service and repair information products, diagnostic software solutions, electronic parts catalogs, business management systems and services, point-of-sale systems, integrated systems for vehicle service shops, OEM purchasing facilitation services, and warranty management systems and analytics to help OEM dealerships manage and track performance.

The *equipment* product category includes solutions for the diagnosis and service of vehicles and industrial equipment. Products include wheel alignment equipment, wheel balancers, tire changers, vehicle lifts, test lane systems, collision repair equipment, air conditioning service equipment, brake service equipment, fluid exchange equipment, transmission troubleshooting equipment, safety testing equipment, battery chargers and hoists.

Snap-on supports the sale of its diagnostics and vehicle service shop equipment by offering training programs as well as after-sales support for its customers, primarily focusing on the technologies and the application of specific products developed and marketed by Snap-on.

Products are marketed under a number of brand names and trademarks, many of which are well known in the vehicle service and industrial markets served. Some of the major trade names and trademarks and the products and services with which they are associated include the following:

Names	Products and Services
Snap-on	Hand tools, power tools, tool storage products (including tool control software and hardware), diagnostics, certain equipment and related accessories, mobile tool stores, websites, electronic parts catalogs, warranty analytics solutions, business management systems and services, OEM specialty tools and equipment development and distribution, and OEM facilitation services
ATI	Aircraft hand tools and machine tools
BAHCO	Saw blades, cutting tools, pruning tools, hand tools, power tools and tool storage
Blackhawk	Collision repair equipment
Blue-Point	Hand tools, power tools, tool storage, diagnostics, certain equipment and related accessories
Cartec	Safety testing, brake testers, test lane equipment, dynamometers, suspension testers, emission testers and other equipment
CDI	Torque tools
Challenger	Vehicle lifts
Fish and Hook	Saw blades, cutting tools, pruning tools, hand tools, power tools and tool storage
Hofmann	Wheel balancers, vehicle lifts, tire changers, wheel aligners, brake testers and test lane equipment
Irimo	Saw blades, cutting tools, hand tools, power tools and tool storage
John Bean	Wheel balancers, vehicle lifts, tire changers, wheel aligners, brake testers and test lane equipment
Lindström	Hand tools
Mitchell1	Repair and service information, shop management systems and business services
Nexiq	Diagnostic tools, information and program distributions for fleet and heavy duty equipment
Pro-Cut	On-car brake lathes, related equipment and accessories

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Sandflex	Hacksaw blades, band saws, saw blades, hole saws and reciprocating saw blades
ShopKey	Repair and service information, shop management systems and business services
Sioux	Power tools
Sun	Diagnostic tools, wheel balancers, vehicle lifts, tire changers, wheel aligners, air conditioning products and emission testers
Williams	Hand tools, tool storage, certain equipment and related accessories

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Financial Services

Snap-on also generates revenue from various financing programs that include: (i) installment sales and lease contracts arising from franchisees customers and Snap-on's industrial and other customers for the purchase or lease of tools, including tool storage, and diagnostic and equipment products on an extended-term payment plan; and (ii) business loans and vehicle leases to franchisees. The decision to finance through Snap-on or another financing entity is solely at the customer's election. When assessing customers for potential financing, Snap-on considers various factors including financial condition, collateral, debt-servicing ability, past payment experience and credit bureau information.

United States

In the United States, Snap-on offers financing through SOC and provides financing for new contracts originated by SOC. Financing revenue from contract originations owned by SOC is recognized by SOC over the life of the contracts, with interest computed on the average daily balances of the underlying contracts.

International

Snap-on also offers financing to its franchisees and customer networks through its international finance subsidiaries located in Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. Snap-on offers financing to its franchisees and customer networks in Ireland, the Netherlands and Germany through its U.K. finance subsidiary. Snap-on offers financing to its franchisees and customer network in Puerto Rico through SOC. Snap-on's international finance subsidiaries own and service the receivables originated through their financing programs. Financing revenue from these contracts is recognized over the life of the contracts, with interest computed on the average daily balances of the underlying contracts.

Other

Franchise fee revenue, including nominal, non-refundable initial and ongoing monthly fees (primarily for sales and business training, and marketing and product promotion programs), is recognized as the fees are earned. Franchise fee revenue totaled \$12.1 million, \$11.9 million and \$9.9 million in fiscal 2014, 2013 and 2012, respectively.

Sales and Distribution

Snap-on markets and distributes its products and related services principally to professional tool and equipment users around the world. The two largest market sectors are the vehicle service and repair sector and the industrial sector.

Vehicle Service and Repair Sector

The vehicle service and repair sector has three main customer groups: (i) professional technicians who purchase tools and diagnostic and equipment products for themselves; (ii) other professional customers related to vehicle repair, including owners and managers of independent repair shops and OEM dealerships who purchase tools and diagnostic and equipment products for use by multiple technicians within a service or repair facility; and (iii) OEMs.

Snap-on provides innovative tool, equipment and business solutions, as well as technical sales support and training, designed to meet technicians evolving needs. Snap-on's mobile tool distribution system offers technicians the convenience of purchasing quality tools at their place of business with minimal disruption of their work routine. Snap-on also provides owners and managers of repair shops, where technicians work, with tools, diagnostic equipment, and repair and service information, including electronic parts catalogs and shop management products. Snap-on's OEM facilitation business provides OEMs with products and services including tools, consulting and facilitation services, which include product procurement, distribution and administrative support to customers for their dealership equipment programs.

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The vehicle service and repair sector is characterized by an increasing rate of technological change within motor vehicles, vehicle population growth and increasing vehicle life, and the resulting effects of these changes on the businesses of both our suppliers and customers. Snap-on believes it is a meaningful participant in the vehicle service and repair market sector.

Industrial Sector

Snap-on markets its products and services globally to a broad cross-section of commercial and industrial customers, including maintenance and repair operations; manufacturing and assembly facilities; various government agencies, facilities and operations, including military operations; vocational and technical schools; aviation and aerospace operations; OEM and service and repair customers; oil and gas developers; mining operations; energy and power

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generation, equipment fabricators and operators; railroad manufacturing and maintenance; customers in agriculture; infrastructure construction companies; and other customers that require instrumentation, service tools and/or equipment for their product and business needs.

The industrial sector for Snap-on focuses on providing value-added products and services to an increasingly expanding global base of customers in critical industries, particularly those in the market segments of natural resources, aerospace, government and technical education. Through its experienced and dispersed sales organization, industrial solutioneers develop unique and highly valued productivity solutions for customers worldwide that leverage Snap-on's product, service and development capabilities.

The industrial sector is characterized by a highly competitive, cost-conscious environment, and a trend toward customers making many of their tool and equipment purchases through one integrated supplier. Snap-on believes it is a meaningful participant in the industrial tools and equipment market sector.

Distribution Channels

Snap-on serves customers primarily through the following channels of distribution: (i) the mobile van channel; (ii) company direct sales; (iii) distributors; and (iv) e-commerce. The following discussion summarizes Snap-on's general approach for each channel, and is not intended to be all-inclusive.

Mobile Van Channel

In the United States, a significant portion of sales to the vehicle service and repair sector is conducted through Snap-on's mobile franchise van channel. Snap-on's franchisees primarily serve vehicle repair technicians and vehicle service shop owners, generally providing weekly contact at the customer's place of business. Franchisees' sales are concentrated in hand and power tools, tool storage products, shop equipment, and diagnostic and repair information products, which can easily be transported in a van and demonstrated during a brief sales call. Franchisees purchase Snap-on's products at a discount from suggested list prices and resell them at prices established by the franchisee. U.S. franchisees are provided a list of calls that serves as the basis of the franchisee's sales route.

Snap-on also provides certain franchisees the opportunity to add vans to their franchise or to add a limited number of additional franchises. Snap-on charges nominal initial and ongoing monthly franchise fees. Since 1991, written franchise agreements have been entered into with all new U.S. franchisees.

Snap-on previously offered an option termed the Gateway Franchise Program to certain potential U.S. franchisees, including those that did not meet the standard franchise qualification requirements. Gateway Franchise Program participants had less upfront investment and were provided an initial base level of consigned inventory from Snap-on to assist them in gaining experience and building equity toward the future purchase of a standard franchise. Snap-on ceased offering new Gateway franchises in February 2013 and anticipates not having any remaining Gateway franchises by the end of February 2015. As of 2014 year end, five of Snap-on's U.S. franchised routes were operated as Gateway franchises.

Snap-on also has a company-owned van program in the United States that is designed to: (i) provide another pool of potential franchisees and field organization personnel; (ii) service customers in select new and/or open routes not currently serviced by franchisees; and (iii) allow Snap-on to pilot new sales and promotional ideas prior to introducing them to franchisees. As of 2014 year end, company-owned vans comprised approximately 5% of the total U.S. van population; Snap-on may elect to increase or reduce the number of company-owned vans in the future.

In addition to its mobile van channel in the United States, Snap-on has replicated its U.S. franchise distribution model in certain other countries including Australia, Canada, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, South Africa, New Zealand, Belgium and Ireland. In many of these markets, as in the United States, purchase decisions are generally made or influenced by professional vehicle service technicians as well as repair shop owners and managers. As of 2014 year end, Snap-on's worldwide mobile van count was approximately 4,800 vans, including approximately 3,500 vans in the United States.

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Through SOC, financing is available to U.S. franchisees, including financing for van leases, working capital loans and loans to help enable new franchisees to fund the purchase of the franchise. In many international markets, Snap-on offers a variety of financing options to its franchisees and/or customer networks through its international finance subsidiaries. The decision to finance through Snap-on or another financing entity is solely at the customer's election.

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Snap-on supports its franchisees with a field organization of regional offices, franchise performance teams, Diagnostic Sales Developers (DSDs), customer care centers and distribution centers. Snap-on also provides sales and business training, and marketing and product promotion programs, as well as customer and franchisee financing programs through SOC and the company's international finance subsidiaries, all of which are designed to strengthen franchisee sales. In North America, the United States National Franchise Advisory Council and the Canadian National Franchise Advisory Council, both of which are composed primarily of franchisees that are elected by franchisees, assist Snap-on in identifying and implementing enhancements to the franchise program.

In the United States, franchisees work closely with DSDs. The DSDs train franchisees on the sale of higher-price-point diagnostics and demonstrate and sell vehicle service shop management and information systems. DSDs work independently and with franchisees to identify and generate sales among vehicle service technicians and repair shop owners and managers. DSDs are Snap-on employees who are compensated through a combination of base salary and commission; a franchisee receives a brokerage fee from certain sales made by the DSDs to the franchisee's customers. Most products sold through franchisees and DSDs are sold under the Snap-on, Blue-Point and ShopKey brand names.

Company Direct Sales

A significant proportion of shop equipment sales in North America under the John Bean, Hofmann, Blackhawk, Challenger and Pro-Cut brands, diagnostic products under the Snap-on brand and information products under the Mitchell1 brand are made by direct and independent sales forces that have responsibility for national and other accounts. As the vehicle service and repair sector consolidates (with more business conducted by national chains and franchised service centers), Snap-on believes these larger organizations can be serviced most effectively by sales people who can demonstrate and sell the full line of diagnostic and equipment products and services. Snap-on also sells these products and services directly to OEMs and their franchised dealers.

Snap-on brand tools and equipment are marketed to industrial and governmental customers in the United States through both industrial sales representatives, who are employees, and independent industrial distributors. Outside of the United States, industrial sales are also conducted through other independent distributors. Sales representatives focus on industrial customers whose main purchase criteria are quality and integrated solutions. As of 2014 year end, Snap-on had industrial sales representatives in the United States (including Puerto Rico), Australia, Canada, Japan, Mexico and various European, Asian, Latin American, Middle Eastern and African countries, with the United States representing the majority of Snap-on's total industrial sales.

Snap-on also sells software, services and solutions to the automotive, commercial, agriculture, power equipment and power sports segments. Products and services are marketed to targeted groups, including OEMs and their dealerships, fleets, and individual repair shops. To effectively reach OEMs, which frequently have a multi-national presence, Snap-on has deployed focused business teams globally.

Distributors

Sales of certain tools and equipment are made through independent distributors who purchase the items from Snap-on and resell them to end users. Hand tools under the BAHCO, Fish and Hook, Lindström and Williams brands and trade names, for example, are sold through distributors in Europe, North and South America, Asia and certain other parts of the world. Wheel service and other vehicle service equipment are sold through distributors primarily under brands including Hofmann, John Bean, Challenger, Pro-Cut, Cartec and Blackhawk. Diagnostic and equipment products are marketed through distributors in South America and Asia, and through both a direct sales force and distributors in Europe under the Snap-on, Sun, BAHCO and Blue-Point brands.

E-commerce

Snap-on's e-commerce development initiatives allow Snap-on to combine the capabilities of the internet with Snap-on's existing brand sales and distribution strengths to reach new and under-served customer segments. Snap-on offers current and prospective customers online, around-the-clock access to research and purchase products through its public internet website at www.snapon.com. The site features an online catalog of Snap-on hand tools, power tools, tool storage units and diagnostic equipment available to customers in the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada and Australia. E-commerce and certain other system enhancement initiatives are designed to improve productivity and further

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leverage the one-on-one relationships and service Snap-on has with its current and prospective customers. Sales through the company's e-commerce distribution channel were not significant in any of the last three years.

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Competition

Snap-on competes on the basis of its product quality and performance, product line breadth and depth, service, brand awareness and imagery, technological innovation and availability of financing (through SOC or its international finance subsidiaries). While Snap-on does not believe that any single company competes with it across all of its product lines and distribution channels, various companies compete in one or more product categories and/or distribution channels.

Snap-on believes it is a leading manufacturer and distributor of professional tools, tool storage, diagnostic and equipment products, and repair software and solutions, offering a broad line of these products to both vehicle service and industrial marketplaces. Various competitors target and sell to professional technicians in the vehicle service and repair sector through the mobile tool distribution channel; Snap-on also competes with companies that sell tools and equipment to vehicle service and repair technicians through retail stores and online, vehicle parts supply outlets, and tool supply warehouses/distributorships. Within the power tools category and the industrial sector, Snap-on has various other competitors, including companies with offerings that overlap with other areas discussed herein. Major competitors selling diagnostics, shop equipment and information to vehicle dealerships and independent repair shops include OEMs and their proprietary electronic parts catalogs, as well as diagnostics and information systems, and other companies that offer products serving this sector.

Raw Materials and Purchased Product

Snap-on's supply of raw materials and purchased components are generally and readily available from numerous suppliers. Snap-on believes it has secured an ample supply of both bar and coil steel for the near future to ensure stable supply to meet material demands. The company does not currently anticipate experiencing any significant impact in 2015 from steel pricing or availability issues.

Patents, Trademarks and Other Intellectual Property

Snap-on vigorously pursues and relies on patent protection to protect its intellectual property and position in its markets. As of 2014 year end, Snap-on and its subsidiaries held approximately 700 active and pending patents in the United States and approximately 1,500 active and pending patents outside of the United States. Sales relating to any single patent did not represent a material portion of Snap-on's revenues in any of the last three years.

Examples of products that have features or designs that benefit from patent protection include wheel alignment systems, wheel balancers, tire changers, vehicle lifts, test lanes, brake lathes, sealed ratchets, electronic torque instruments, ratcheting screwdrivers, emissions-sensing devices and diagnostic equipment.

Much of the technology used in the manufacture of vehicle service tools and equipment is in the public domain. Snap-on relies primarily on trade secret protection to protect proprietary processes used in manufacturing. Methods and processes are patented when appropriate. Copyright protection is also utilized when appropriate.

Trademarks used by Snap-on are of continuing importance to Snap-on in the marketplace. Trademarks have been registered in the United States and more than 120 other countries, and additional applications for trademark registrations are pending. Snap-on vigorously polices proper use of its trademarks. Snap-on's right to manufacture and sell certain products is dependent upon licenses from others; however, these products under license do not represent a material portion of Snap-on's net sales.

Domain names have become a valuable corporate asset for companies around the world, including Snap-on. Domain names often contain a trademark or service mark or even a corporate name and are often considered intellectual property. The recognition and value of the Snap-on name, trademark and domain name are core strengths of the company.

Snap-on strategically licenses the Snap-on brand to carefully selected manufacturing and distribution companies for items such as apparel, work boots, lighting and a variety of other goods, in order to further build equity and market presence for the company's strongest brand.

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Environmental

Snap-on is subject to various environmental laws, ordinances, regulations, and other requirements of government authorities in the United States and other nations. At Snap-on, these environmental liabilities are managed through the Snap-on Environmental, Health and Safety Management System (EH & SMS), which is applied worldwide. The system is based upon continual improvement and is certified to ISO 14001:2004 and OHSAS 18001:2007, verified through Det Norske Veritas (DNV) Certification, Inc.

Snap-on believes that it complies with applicable environmental control requirements in its operations. Expenditures on environmental matters through EH & SMS have not had, and Snap-on does not for the foreseeable future expect them to have, a material effect upon Snap-on's capital expenditures, earnings or competitive position.

Employees

Snap-on employed approximately 11,400 people at the end of January 2015; Snap-on employed approximately 11,300 people at the end of January 2014.

Approximately 2,600 employees, or 23% of Snap-on's worldwide workforce, are represented by unions and/or covered under collective bargaining agreements. The number of covered union employees whose contracts expire over the next five years approximates 1,250 employees in 2015; 400 employees in 2016; and 600 employees in 2017; there are no contracts currently scheduled to expire in 2018 or 2019. In recent years, Snap-on has not experienced any significant work slowdowns, stoppages or other labor disruptions.

There can be no assurance that these and other future contracts with Snap-on's unions will be renegotiated upon terms acceptable to Snap-on.

Working Capital

Most of Snap-on's businesses are not seasonal and their inventory needs are relatively constant. Snap-on did not have a significant backlog of orders at 2014 year end. In recent years, Snap-on has been using its working capital to fund, in part, the continued growth of the company's financial services portfolio.

Snap-on's liquidity and capital resources and use of working capital are discussed herein in Part II, Item 7, Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations.

As of 2014 year end, neither Snap-on nor any of its segments depend on any single customer, small group of customers or government for any material part of its revenues.

Item 1A: Risk Factors

In evaluating the company, careful consideration should be given to the following risk factors, in addition to the other information included in this Annual Report on Form 10-K, including the Consolidated Financial Statements and the related notes. Each of these risk factors could adversely affect the company's business, operating results, cash flows and/or financial condition, as well as adversely affect the value of an investment in the company's common stock.

Economic conditions and world events could affect our operating results.

We, our franchisees and our customers, may be adversely affected by changing economic conditions, including conditions that may particularly impact specific regions. These conditions may result in reduced consumer and investor confidence, instability in the credit and financial markets, volatile corporate profits, and reduced business and consumer spending. We, our franchisees and our customers, and the economy as a whole, also may be affected by future world or local events outside our control, such as acts of terrorism, developments in the war on terrorism,

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conflicts in international situations and natural disasters, as well as government-related developments or issues. These factors may affect our results of operations by reducing our sales, margins and/or net earnings as a result of a slowdown in customer orders or order cancellations, impact the availability of raw materials and/or the supply chain, and could potentially lead to future impairment of our intangible assets. In addition, political and social turmoil related to international conflicts and terrorist acts may put pressure on economic conditions abroad. Unstable political, social and economic conditions may make it difficult for our franchisees, customers, suppliers and us to accurately forecast and plan future business activities. If such conditions persist, our business, financial condition, results of operations and cash flows could be negatively affected.

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Raw material and energy price fluctuations and shortages (including steel and various fuel sources) could adversely affect the ability to obtain needed manufacturing materials and could adversely affect our results of operations.

The principal raw material used in the manufacture of our products is steel, which we purchase in competitive, price-sensitive markets. To meet Snap-on's high quality standards, our steel needs range from specialized alloys, which are available only from a limited group of approved suppliers, to commodity types of alloys. These raw materials have historically exhibited price and demand cyclicity. Some of these materials have been, and in the future may be, in short supply, particularly in the event of mill shutdowns or production cut backs. As some steel alloys require specialized manufacturing procedures, we could experience inventory shortages if we were required to use an alternative manufacturer on short notice.