



*News Release*  
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## **VIPAR Heavy Duty President Chris Baer Announces Leadership Team; Outlines Organization’s “Game Plan for Growth”**

VIPAR Heavy Duty president Chris Baer has announced his new leadership team and the promotion of three team members at a news conference during Heavy Duty Aftermarket Week (HDAW) 2017. Baer named Larry Griffin, vice president of program management, Andrei Katibnikov, vice president of information technology and Jeff Paul, vice president of marketing. All three had previously served as directors within the organization. Baer also announced that Griffin, Katibnikov, Paul and Jim Pennig, vice president of business development, have been named to the organization’s new executive management team.

Griffin joined VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2012 and is responsible for directing the activities of the organization’s program management team that oversees all supplier relationships.

Katibnikov is responsible for all IT solutions including infrastructure design and technology, and information systems strategies. Before joining VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2016, Katibnikov had served in an advisory role within the organization helping develop and provide support for the company’s information technology infrastructure.

Paul has been with VIPAR Heavy Duty since 2002 and is responsible for data and market research, marketing strategies, branding, communications, public relations and event management.

Pennig joined VIPAR Heavy Duty in 2006 and is responsible for managing the business development team to grow the organization and increase group participation and national fleet account initiatives.

In addition to the executive management team, the other members of the organization’s leadership team include Beth San Filippo, controller; Wendi Frederick, manager of rebate administration; Jay

Pagano, general manager of Global Parts Network, LLC; and Mark Iasiello, general manager of Power Heavy Duty.

“As we enter our third generation of leadership, we have been diligent in assembling a strong and respected team to best serve our customers,” said Baer, who was named president of VIPAR Heavy Duty in October 2016. “Collectively this group represents a vast amount of aftermarket industry knowledge and experience, with the vision to fully support our organization’s goals.”

Baer said the leadership team is poised to help accelerate organizational growth as VIPAR Heavy Duty enters phase three of its history. “The first phase of VIPAR Heavy Duty was about the entrepreneurs who provided the critical mass to get the organization started more than 27 years ago, while the last 16 years were centered on innovation,” explained Baer.

“As part of our third phase we have outlined a ‘Game Plan for Growth’ to ensure our distributor network remains on top of the market for years to come. We can never lose sight that at our fundamental core we are a truck parts buying group working to help enhance and grow our stockholders’ businesses while looking to grow market share with our supplier partners. Not only will we remain focused on that core mission, as an organization we must be able to adapt in order to tackle the challenges and seize the opportunities presented by the aftermarket.”

Baer has introduced key initiatives in the Game Plan for Growth focused on: being data driven, especially in relationship to marketing; driving operational efficiencies through continual improvements and benchmarking; and fully utilizing its wholly-owned subsidiary, Global Parts Network, LLC, as a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

Another critical initiative centers on technology as a driver for growth. As Baer explains, “Tomorrow’s business can’t operate on yesterday’s technology with data as the new currency.”

The Game Plan for Growth will also emphasize the organization’s active involvement in the global aftermarket community, supported by joining the global aftermarket trade group NEXUS Automotive International SA (N!) and partnering with Automotive Distribution Network (The Network) and Automotive Parts Associates (APA Group) to form NEXUS North America, LLC in 2016.

Baer concluded that the Game Plan for Growth initiatives are anchored by VIPAR Heavy Duty’s corporate core values of accountability, collaboration, innovation, integrity and being stockholder driven. He said each initiative will be instrumental to the group’s future success.

For more information on VIPAR Heavy Duty, visit [www.vipar.com](http://www.vipar.com) or email: [info@vipar.com](mailto:info@vipar.com).

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