



Point S Achieves Record Expansion in 2023

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[Joy Kopcha](#)



Point S USA added a record number of new stores in 2023 — 69 — and expanded into three new states: Michigan, Maine and Maryland. The pace puts the group ahead of schedule in its goal of becoming a 500-store cooperative by 2028.

To put that growth into perspective, 69 new stores decimates the previous record, set in 2022, when dealers added 28 Point S locations in the U.S.

CEO Walter Lybeck said, “We mean it when we say we were going to grow. We’re going to make this happen.”

Of the 69 new stores, 39 are branded Point S locations, while the other 30 joined via the cooperative's new Associated Dealer program, which allows tire dealers to join the group without rebranding. (The goal is to ultimately convert those Associated Dealer stores into fully branded Point S members.)

Existing Point S dealers added 22 new stores in 2023. Eric Gill, the largest Point S dealer in the U.S., was the leader in that front, adding 15 new Gills Point S locations.

Craig Bruneel, current chairman of the board of Point S dealers, said, “We are positioning Point S to be valuable to single store owners and multi-store owners.”

One expansion story

Among the new members to join Point S in 2023 is Bay Area Point S, a seven-store operation in Maryland owned by Brandon Tracey, John Fisher and Michael Gosnell.

Tracey and Fisher were long-time employees of the business and were offered the opportunity to become its owners in 2023. They added Gosnell as a minority partner. The business had previously been part of Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co.'s Tire and Service Network, but Tracey and Fisher were looking for a new option. Other groups recruited them, but they landed with Point S.

Tracey said they liked the idea of having an ownership stake in the cooperation and saw a path to improving profitability.

“We want to take care of our customers,” Tracey said. And doing that while “knowing that you’re a part of something” bigger was a real draw.

The decision to join Point S has ushered in big changes for their stores, from new branding and signs to new tire brands. Tracey said their inventory previously was 99% Goodyear products, but Fisher said going forward, “Nokian will be our primary brand.”

Their seven stores are also the first in Maryland to use the Point S brand. But they don't see that as a hinderance.

Fisher said, “It's not what's on the building, it's who is in the building.” He believes his and Tracey's longevity as store managers, and the long-time service of other employees, is what keeps customers coming back.

“We want to expand,” Tracey said. “People in our area aren't familiar with Point S — but they will be.”

Fisher said, “When we get reviews, we don't want to see ‘a great price.’ We want customer service reviews,” and that's why they train their team to take extra steps to take care of customers. It might mean making sure an older customer's finished vehicle is pulled up close to the front door, or it might be opening the door for a parent with a stroller and small children in tow.

Gosnell, who focuses on customer service initiatives, said, “Our Chick-fil-A sauce is our people.

9 Takeaways From Mr. Tire, Joe Tomarchio

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After more than 50 years in the tire industry, Joe Tomarchio may have retired from Monro Inc. in 2023. But he showed he hasn't lost his zeal as he took to the stage at the 2024 Point S USA dealer meeting.

Here are nine takeaways from Tomarchio's talk.

- What's the most important piece of equipment in your tire dealership? (And hint, it's not your people. They're assets.) Tomarchio's take: the telephone.
- Four things you can't teach or train, but are critical to business: Enthusiasm. Attitude. Work ethic. Moral compass.
- Thoughts on wages: "I believe if you're paying peanuts, you get monkeys."
- How to deal with an issue with an employee: "I was polite, honest and direct." Some people aren't meant to work in a tire dealership, but that's OK. "I want to promote them to customer."
- First line item he studied: Gross profit dollars per store compared to the previous year, quarter or month.
- How to identify ticket takers from salespeople: Create a gap report and look at what the customer came in for, and what the final ticket included. He wouldn't stand for overselling, but wanted to see additional services that the customer needed, such as alignments, wheel balancing, etc.
- Philosophy on price increases: When he received a notice of a price increase of any kind — whether from the utility company or a tire supplier — he and his brother Fred Tomarchio, co-founders of Mr. Tire — found something to attach a price hike to. It might have been to valve stems, which customers would never price shop by telephone.
- What's a fair price? "The highest price I can charge."
- Items he'd bid or price shop on a regular cadence: Insurance, oil, uniforms, shop towels. "You do not get what you deserve. You get what you negotiate."

