

Horizon Global Corp
Form 10-K
March 10, 2017

UNITED STATES
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION
Washington D.C. 20549

Form 10-K

(Mark
One)

ANNUAL REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 OR 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE
ACT OF 1934

For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2016

Or

TRANSITION REPORT PURSUANT TO SECTION 13 or 15(d) OF THE SECURITIES EXCHANGE
ACT OF 1934

For the transition period from _____ to _____
Commission file number 001-37427

HORIZON GLOBAL CORPORATION

(Exact Name of Registrant as Specified in Its Charter)

Delaware

(State or Other Jurisdiction of Incorporation or Organization) 47-3574483
(IRS Employer Identification No.)

2600 W. Big Beaver Road, Suite 555

Troy, Michigan 48084

(Address of Principal Executive Offices, Including Zip Code)

(248) 593-8820

(Registrant's telephone number, including area code)

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

Title of Each Class:	Name of Each Exchange on Which Registered:
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Common stock, \$0.01 par value	New York Stock Exchange
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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 Section 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) is not contained herein, and will not be contained, to the best of Registrant's knowledge, in definitive proxy or information statements incorporated by reference in Part III of this Form 10-K or any amendment to this Form 10-K.

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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 definition of "accelerated filer," "large accelerated filer," and "smaller reporting company" in Rule 12b-2 of the Exchange Act.

Large Accelerated Filer Accelerated Filer Non-accelerated Filer
(Do not check if a smaller reporting company) Smaller Reporting Company

Indicate by check mark whether the registrant is a shell company (as defined in Rule 12b-2 of the Act). Yes No
The aggregate market value of the common stock held by non-affiliates of the Registrant as of June 30, 2016 was approximately \$209.9 million, based upon the closing sales price of the Registrant's common stock, \$0.01 par value, reported for such date on the New York Stock Exchange. For purposes of this calculation only, directors and executive officers are deemed to be affiliates of the Registrant.

As of March 7, 2017, the number of outstanding shares of the Registrant's common stock, \$0.01 par value, was 25,536,680 shares.

Portions of the Registrant's Proxy Statement for the 2017 Annual Meeting of Stockholders are incorporated herein by reference in Part III of this Annual Report on Form 10-K to the extent stated herein.

Horizon Global Corporation
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Forward-Looking Statements

This Annual Report on Form 10-K may contain "forward-looking statements" as defined in the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995. Forward-looking statements speak only as of the date they are made and give our current expectations or forecasts of future events. These forward-looking statements can be identified by the use of forward-looking words, such as "may," "could," "should," "estimate," "project," "forecast," "intend," "expect," "anticipate," "believe," "target," "plan" or other comparable words, or by discussions of strategy that may involve risks and uncertainties.

These forward-looking statements are subject to numerous assumptions, risks and uncertainties which could materially affect our business, financial condition or future results including, but not limited to, risks and uncertainties with respect to: the Company's integration of the Westfalia Group (defined herein); leverage; liabilities imposed by the Company's debt instruments; market demand; competitive factors; supply constraints; material and energy costs; technology factors; litigation; government and regulatory actions; the Company's accounting policies; future trends; general economic and currency conditions; various conditions specific to the Company's business and industry; and other risks that are discussed in, Part I, Item 1A, "Risk Factors." The risks described in this Annual Report on Form 10-K are not the only risks facing our Company. Additional risks and uncertainties not currently known to us or that we currently deemed to be immaterial also may materially adversely affect our business, financial position and results of operations or cash flows.

The cautionary statements set forth above should be considered in connection with any subsequent written or oral forward-looking statements that we or persons acting on our behalf may issue. We caution readers not to place undue reliance on the statements, which speak only as of the date of this Annual Report on Form 10-K. We do not undertake any obligation to review or confirm analysts' expectations or estimates or to release publicly any revisions to any forward-looking statement to reflect events or circumstances after the date of this Annual Report on Form 10-K or to reflect the occurrence of unanticipated events, except as otherwise required by law.

We disclose important factors that could cause our actual results to differ materially from our expectations implied by our forward-looking statements under Item 7, "Management's Discussion and Analysis of Financial Condition and Results of Operations," and elsewhere in this Annual Report on Form 10-K. These cautionary statements qualify all forward-looking statements attributed to us or persons acting on our behalf. When we indicate that an event, condition or circumstance could or would have an adverse effect on us, we mean to include effects upon our business, financial and other conditions, results of operations, prospects and ability to service our debt.

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PART I

Item 1. Business

Overview

Horizon Global Corporation, which we refer to herein as "Horizon," "Horizon Global," "we" or the "Company," became an independent, publicly traded company as the result of a spin-off, which we refer to herein as the "spin-off," from TriMas Corporation, or "TriMas," on June 30, 2015.

We are a leading designer, manufacturer and distributor of a wide variety of high-quality, custom-engineered towing, trairling, cargo management and other related accessory products on a global basis, serving the automotive aftermarket, retail and original equipment, or "OE," channels.

In the fourth quarter of 2016, as a result of the Westfalia Group acquisition, the Company realigned its executive management structure, which changed the information used by our chief operating decision maker to assess performance and allocate resources. As a result, we report the results of our business in three reportable segments: Horizon Americas, Horizon Asia Pacific, and Horizon Europe Africa. We have recast prior period amounts to conform to the way we currently manage and monitor segment performance under the new segments.

Horizon Americas has historically operated primarily in North America, and we believe has been a leader in towing and trairling-related products sold through retail, aftermarket, OE and e-commerce channels. In recent years, Horizon Americas expanded its geographic footprint into the South American market. Horizon Asia Pacific and Horizon Europe Africa focus their sales and manufacturing efforts outside of North and South America, historically operating primarily in Australia and Europe, respectively, and we believe have been leaders in towing related products sold through the OE and aftermarket channels. We have expanded our geographic footprint into New Zealand, Thailand, the United Kingdom, and South Africa. We are in the early stages of our development in these additional markets, initially focusing primarily on supporting OE customers.

Our products are used in two primary categories across the world: commercial applications, or "Work," and recreational activities, or "Play." Some of the markets in our Work category include agricultural, automotive, construction, fleet, industrial, marine, military, mining and municipalities. Some of the markets in our Play category include equestrian, power sports, recreational vehicle, specialty automotive, truck accessory and other specialty towing applications. We believe that the primary brands we offer are among the most recognized in the markets we serve and are known for quality, safety and performance. Our products reach end consumers through many avenues, including independent retailers, warehouse distributors, dealers, OE, retail stores and online retailers.

We believe no individual competitor serving the channels we participate in can match our broad product portfolio, which we categorize into the following four groups:

Towing: This product category includes devices and accessories installed on a tow-vehicle for the purpose of attaching a trailer, camper, etc. such as hitches, fifth wheels, gooseneck hitches, weight distribution systems, wiring harnesses, draw bars, ball mounts, crossbars, towbars, security and other towing accessories;

Trairling: This product category includes control devices and components of the trailer itself such as brake controls, jacks, winches, couplers, interior and exterior vehicle lighting and brake replacement parts;

Cargo Management: This product category includes a wide variety of products used to facilitate the transportation of various forms of cargo, to secure that cargo or to organize items. Examples of these products are bike racks, roof cross bar systems, cargo carriers, luggage boxes, car interior protective products, rope, tie-downs, tarps, tarp straps, bungee cords, loading ramps and interior travel organizers; and

Other: This product category includes a diverse range of items in our portfolio that do not fit into any of the previous three main categories. Items in this category include tubular push bars, side steps, sports bars, skid plates, oil pans and commercial brooms and brushes.

We have positioned our product portfolio to create a variety of options based on price-point, ranging from entry-level to premium-level products across most of our markets. We believe the brands we offer in our aftermarket channel have significant customer recognition, with the four most significant being Reese®, Hayman-Reese™, Draw-Tite® and

Westfalia®. We believe all four have substantial market share and have been leading brands in the towing market for over 50 years. These brands provide the foundation of our market position based on worldwide commercial and consumer acceptance. We also maintain a collection of

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regionally recognized brands that include Aqua Clear™, Bulldog®, BTM, DHF, Engetran, Fulton®, Harper®, Kovil, Laitner™, Parkside®, Reese Secure™, Reese Explorer™, Reese Power Sports, Reese Towpower™, ROLA®, Tekonsha®, Trojan®, WesBarg® and Witter Towbar Systems. In addition to these product brands, we historically marketed our products to our OE customers in Australia, and more recently in North America, under the name TriMotive.

For information pertaining to net sales and operating profit attributed to our reportable segments, refer to Note 16, "Segment Information," included in Item 8, "Financial Statements and Supplementary Data," within this Annual Report on Form 10-K.

Our Industry

Our products are sold into a diverse set of end-markets; the primary applications relate to automotive accessories for light and recreational vehicles. Purchases of automotive accessory parts are discretionary and we believe demand is driven by macro-economic factors including (i) employment trends, (ii) consumer sentiment and (iii) fuel prices, among others.

We believe all of these metrics impact both our Work- and Play-related sales. In addition, we believe the Play-related sales are more sensitive to changes in these indices, given the Play-related sales tend to be more directly related to disposable income levels. In general, recent decreases in unemployment and fuel prices, coupled with increases in consumer sentiment, are positive trends for our businesses.

Aftermarket and Retail Channels

We sell our products in the aftermarket and retail channels to a wide range of customers, including distributors, automotive retail stores, non-automotive retailers, installers and mass merchants. More recent trends in the aftermarket and retail channels include:

Channel Consolidation: In the more mature market of the United States, there has been increasing consolidation in distribution networks with larger, more sophisticated aftermarket distributors and retailers gaining market share. In kind, these distributors generally require larger, more sophisticated suppliers with product expertise, category management and supply chain services and capabilities, as well as a global manufacturing and services footprint. We provide customers in this category the opportunity to rationalize their supply base of vendors in our product lines by virtue of our broad offering and product expertise; and

Growth of Online Capabilities: Reaching consumers directly through online capabilities, including e-commerce, is having an increasing impact on the global automotive aftermarket and retail channels. Establishment of a robust online presence is critical for suppliers regardless of whether or not they participate directly in e-commerce. We believe we are positioned well to take advantage of this continuing trend, given our established online presence. We support consumers by offering a wide range of information on our products and services, including installation videos, custom-fit guides and links to authorized dealers, both brick and mortar and e-commerce.

OE Channels

While OE demand is typically driven by planned vehicle production, suppliers also grow by increasing their product content per vehicle through sales of existing product lines or expansion into new product line offerings. Given the consolidation and globalization throughout the automotive industry, suppliers combining a global presence with strong engineering, technology, manufacturing, supply chain and customer support will be best positioned to take advantage of OE business opportunities.

More recent trends in the global OE supplier market include:

Global Platform/Supplier Consolidation: OEs are adopting global vehicle platforms to decrease product development costs and increase manufacturing efficiency and profitability. As a result, OEs are selecting suppliers that have the capacity to manufacture and deliver products on a worldwide basis as well as the flexibility to adapt products to local variations.

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Suppliers with a global supply chain and efficient manufacturing capabilities are best positioned to benefit from this trend. We believe we are uniquely positioned to take advantage of this trend as a result of our global manufacturing footprint, highly developed supply chain relationships and track record of success in solving application challenges in our product lines;

Outsourcing of Design and Manufacturing of Vehicle Parts and Systems: OEs continually strive to simplify their assembly processes, lower costs and reduce development times. As a result, they have increasingly relied on suppliers to perform many of the design, engineering, research and development and assembly functions traditionally performed by OEs. Suppliers with extensive design and engineering capabilities are in the best position to benefit from this trend as they are able to offer OEs value-added solutions with superior features and convenience. We believe certain OEs have sought us out to assist with their engineering challenges to increase towing capacity and for the many solutions provided by our existing products; and

Shorter Product Development Cycles: Due to frequent shifts in government regulations and customer preferences, OEs are requiring suppliers to continue to provide new designs and product innovations. These trends are prevalent in mature markets as well as, emerging markets, which are advancing rapidly towards the regulatory standards and consumer preferences of the more mature markets. Suppliers with strong technologies, robust global engineering and development capabilities are best positioned to meet OE demands for rapid innovation. Our global engineering footprint and exposure to vehicles early in the development cycle enables a responsive solution to changing customer needs and facilitates the rapid deployment of the solution across the global launch of the customer's platform.

Competitive Strengths

We believe our reportable segments share and benefit from the following competitive strengths:

Diverse Product Portfolio of Market Leading Brands. We believe we benefit from a diverse portfolio of high-quality and highly-engineered products sold under globally recognized and market leading brand names. By offering a wide range of products, we are able to provide a complete solution to satisfy our customers' towing, trailering and cargo management needs, as well as serve diverse channels through effective brand management. Our brands are well-known in their respective product areas and channels. We believe that we are the leading supplier of towing products and among the leading suppliers of trailering products globally.

Global Scale with Flexible Manufacturing Footprint and Supply Chain. We were built through internal growth and a series of acquisitions to become the only truly global automotive accessories company with the products we offer. We have the ability to produce low-volume, customized, quick-turn products in our global manufacturing facilities, while our sourcing arrangements with third-party suppliers provide us with the flexibility to manufacture or source high-volume products as end-market demand fluctuates. Our flexible manufacturing capability, low-cost manufacturing facilities and established supply chain allow us to more quickly and efficiently respond to changes in end-market demand.

Long-Term Relationships with a Diverse Customer Base. Our customers encompass a broad range of OEs, mass merchants, e-commerce websites, distributors, dealers, and independent installers, representing multiple channels to reaching the end consumer. Blue chip customers include Wal-Mart, Ford Motor Company, FCA, Volkswagen, BMW, Mercedes-Benz, AutoZone, Amazon, Toyota, Canadian Tire, LKQ, U-Haul, Home Depot and Etrailer, among others. Our customer relationships are well established, with many exceeding 20 years. These strong partnerships can provide stability to our revenue base through economic cycles. We believe Horizon's diverse product portfolio, global scale and flexible manufacturing capabilities enable us to provide a unique value proposition to customers.

Globally Competitive Cost Structure. Since becoming an independent public company, we have focused on margin improvement activities, identifying and acting on projects to reduce our cost structure. With focused, identifiable projects well under way or complete, we believe we will benefit from improved operating margins and cash flow that can then be deployed to high-value creation activities. The combination of our strong brand names, leading market position, flexible manufacturing and sourcing operations have historically resulted in significant cash flow generation.

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Experienced Management Team. Our management team is led by our Chief Executive Officer, Mark Zeffiro, who was a senior executive at TriMas for over seven years and has more than 25 years of financial, operational and business leadership experience with companies such as Black & Decker and General Electric Company. David Rice, our Chief Financial Officer, joined TriMas in 2005 and brings more than 30 years of financial, audit and leadership experience to the role. David was previously division finance officer of Cequent Performance Products. John Aleva, President of Horizon Americas, has nearly 30 years of experience in automotive aftermarket, retail and OE, and has been with Horizon for over 11 years. The leadership team of Horizon Asia Pacific includes Jason Kieseker, who joined the Horizon business in 2001 and has held various leadership roles within our Horizon Asia Pacific business. The leadership team of Horizon Europe Africa includes Paul Caruso, who has over 30 years of experience in a variety of roles within the industrial and automotive markets.

Key Business Priorities

Horizon Global established three strategic platforms for value creation focused on business improvement and transformation, supported by a company culture of continuous improvement.

Margin Expansion. Our first priority is to drive the organization to a 10% operating margin level within our strategic planning period. We believe the investments made in new and upgraded facilities and equipment over the past few years should provide the foundation, without significant additional investment, for additional margin expansion. We are developing an organization in which all team members are focused on constantly improving the efficiency of all operations through the adoption of lean and continuous improvement practices.

Capital Structure. Our second priority is to improve our capital structure. Our net leverage ratio, as defined in certain of the agreements covering our indebtedness, at December 31, 2016 was approximately 3.6 times. The common stock offering and convertible notes offering executed in 2017 subsequently lowered our leverage ratio. Refer to Note 19, "Subsequent Events" in Item 8, "Financial Statements and Supplementary Data," included within this Annual Report on Form 10-K for additional information. Our long-term net leverage ratio target is less than 2 times. We aim to accomplish this goal through both margin improvement as well as paying down our fixed obligations, and should we decide to do so, we have a structure in place that allows us to prepay debt in addition to the amortization required under our term debt.

Organic Growth. Our third priority is to grow the business 3% to 5% on an organic basis, annually. We have identified five broad areas of focused growth activities, involving geographic markets and sales channels, which we believe are particularly aligned with our competitive strengths.

Growth Strategies

Prior to becoming an independent public company, Horizon operated on a regional basis under separate management teams, with independent business decisions and resource allocations made by the Horizon Americas, Horizon Asia Pacific and Horizon Europe Africa leaders. As a public company, we are reorganizing our global operations to operate as a single combined entity. As a result, we believe that we have multiple opportunities to integrate, improve and grow our business, whether via organic initiatives or via acquisitions of new products or in new geographies, through the following strategies:

Original Equipment. The global market for accessories and vehicle personalization is increasing and automotive manufacturers are looking for suppliers to partner with to create genuine accessories to meet this need. Historically, this has been a regional effort, but the growth of global OE has increased the need for global suppliers. Our geographic footprint, existing customer relationships and the increase in global vehicle platforms align to present us with unique opportunities to grow with our OE customers.

E-commerce. We intend to leverage the breadth of our product portfolio and global manufacturing footprint to expand our presence in the high growth e-commerce channel. This strategy is applicable in our developed markets where a focus on content delivery and customer support drive growth. It is also a powerful tool as we look at developing new, less mature markets around the world, enabling a direct connection with the users of our product set.

Latin American Markets. Since entering the Latin American market, we have witnessed a desire to accessorize vehicles among new entrants to the middle class. We expanded our global footprint and product portfolio in Brazil by

acquiring DHF Soluções Automotivas Ltda and Engetran Engenharia, Indústria, e Comércio de Peças e Acessórios Veiculares Ltda, respectively, which are reported under Horizon Americas. We believe these expansions into new geographies provide opportunities for growth, while supporting both new and existing global customers.

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Chinese Market. China is in the early stages of adoption for towing and trailering products. As this adoption rate increases, there is an opportunity for us to bring our experience in the safe use of these products into the market in a meaningful capacity. The rapidly growing middle class, in concert with a developing interest in an outdoor recreational lifestyle, is expected to result in incremental demand for our automotive aftermarket products and accessories. We intend to leverage our existing relationships with global OEs and our global manufacturing and distribution network to expand our sales in this developing economy.

Product Innovation. Our focus in multi-generational product planning is to formalize the process by which we integrate the feedback and needs of users into our product development engine. We look to move beyond simply responding to the feedback that we receive, to anticipating the functionality future products need to possess to enrich the lives of our users.

Marketing, Customers and Distribution

Horizon employs a dedicated sales force in each of our primary channels. In serving our customers globally, we rely upon our strong historical customer relationships, custom engineering capability, brand recognition, broad product offerings, our established distribution network and varied merchandising strategies to bolster our towing, trailering, cargo management and accessory product sales. Significant Horizon customers include Ford Motor Company, Toyota and General Motors/Holden in the OE channel; Wal-Mart, AutoZone and Super Retail Group in the retail channel; and LKQ, U-Haul and the Proex Group in the aftermarket channel. No customer represented greater than 10% of total revenue during the years ended December 31, 2016, 2015 or 2014.

Competition

The competitive environment for automotive accessory products is highly fragmented and is characterized by numerous smaller suppliers, even the largest of which tend to focus in narrow product categories. We believe there is no individual competitor that has the breadth of product portfolio on a global basis in the markets we serve. Significant towing competitors include Curt Manufacturing, B&W Trailer Hitches, The Bosal Group, Brink, Buyers Products Company, Demco Products, PullRite, Westin Automotive Products and Camco. Significant trailering competitors include Pacific Rim, Dutton-Lainson, Shelby, Ultra-Fab, Sea-Sense and Atwood. In addition, competition