

“POSTPONEMENT” IN THE LOGISTICAL SYSTEMS OF NEW AUTOMOBILES MARKETED IN PORTUGAL: THE BRANDS AND QUALITY

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Automobile production is a worldwide industry in which quality has always been a very prominent and pertinent issue. There exists, however, certain links in the logistical chain that involve local initiatives in the finishing of the final product – including final testing, repairs to breakdowns and damage that occurred during transport operations. There also exists a group of steps or links in this type of operation, designated as “postponement”, including delicate tasks of customization which, if they are not well carried out, may bring into question the integrity of the vehicle, its future reliability and the image of the make or brand. These are therefore of no minor importance in the overall issue. In the case of Portugal we find that it is the transporters who secure the distribution process from gate release at the production line through to delivery to the final customer, as indicated by the local concessionaire. This long logistical segment includes the above-mentioned postponement operations, carried out at appropriate logistical platforms or support facilities. It may be considered rather surprising therefore to discover that quality certification of these platforms or supports is not a priority objective for the automobile manufacturers, for their concessionaires or even the final customer, a situation quite the opposite to that which occurs in the factories themselves on their vehicle or component production lines. Finally, strategic logistics formulation emerges like a strategy foundation supported in logistics competencies; from logistics strategy to strategic logistics.