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Plain Bearing Market Opportunity, Growth Drivers, Industry Trend Analysis, and Forecast 2025 - 2034

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Abstracts

The Global Plain Bearing Market was valued at USD 10.4 billion in 2024 and is estimated to grow at a CAGR of 5.6% to reach USD 17.8 billion by 2034. This consistent growth is driven by the widespread adoption of automation in high-performance machinery. As industries move toward greater operational precision and productivity, plain bearings are becoming increasingly essential due to their low maintenance requirements and long-term reliability. These components are particularly valued in applications where machinery must perform under harsh or contaminated conditions, thanks to their durability and ability to endure high loads.

The rising integration of automation across sectors—ranging from production lines to logistics and material handling—continues to support the demand for plain bearings. These bearings are often utilized in environments requiring both efficiency and minimal intervention, contributing to cost reductions and maximizing uptime. The market is also experiencing a boost from the expanding aerospace sector, where the need for lightweight, durable, and maintenance-free components is essential. The development and deployment of modern aircraft, along with a rise in international air travel and defense operations, are further amplifying demand.

In terms of product type, plain bearings are segmented into angular contact, journal, linear, thrust, and other types. Among these, journal bearings accounted for the largest share, generating USD 3.6 billion in revenue in 2024. This segment is projected to grow at a CAGR of around 6.2% from 2025 to 2034. Journal bearings are favored for their simple design and their capability to support high-speed, high-load applications. Their wide use in engines, turbines, electric motors, pumps, and industrial machinery is tied to their performance reliability, especially in demanding operational environments. Their ability to facilitate continuous rotational movement with appropriate lubrication helps

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minimize friction, ultimately reducing maintenance expenses and enhancing equipment longevity—factors critical in productivity-dependent sectors.

The distribution of plain bearings in the market is categorized into direct and indirect channels. The direct distribution segment held 65.9% of the market in 2024 and is forecasted to grow at a CAGR of approximately 5.8% throughout the forecast period. Direct sales are particularly important in precision-sensitive industries such as aerospace, automotive, and heavy machinery, where the reliability of parts and the accuracy of technical integration are non-negotiable. Having direct access to customers also enables suppliers to respond more efficiently to performance concerns, gather real-time feedback, and adapt products accordingly, enhancing customer satisfaction and reducing delays in development cycles. Moreover, bypassing intermediaries helps suppliers manage pricing, margins, and inventory more effectively, providing a competitive edge in a market where operational efficiency and product uniqueness are key.

Based on end-use industry, the market includes segments such as automotive, industrial, aerospace, energy, construction equipment, agriculture, oilfield machinery, office products, and others. The automotive sector led the market in 2024 and is expected to retain its dominant position throughout the forecast period. The growing push toward fuel-efficient, high-performance vehicles is increasing the demand for durable and lightweight materials, indirectly fueling the need for reliable bearing components. Technological advancements in automotive manufacturing processes are also creating opportunities for more specialized bearing applications.

The North American market, particularly in the United States, continues to be a major contributor. In 2024, the U.S. plain bearing market was valued at USD 1.13 billion and is projected to grow at a CAGR of 5.7% between 2025 and 2034. The country is seeing increased investments in automotive, aerospace, and industrial automation sectors, supported by both government initiatives and advancements in composite materials. Trends such as reshoring of manufacturing and capital investment in high-tech machinery are also playing a significant role in strengthening the local market.

Key companies driving innovation and market expansion include ElringKlinger AG, ELCEE Group, HepcoMotion, NSK Ltd., igus GmbH, NTN Corporation, RBC Bearings, Ovako, Schaeffler Group, SKF Group, SGL Carbon, THK, UBC Precision Bearing Manufacturing, Timken Company, and ZOLLERN GmbH & Co. KG. Many of these players are actively working to integrate more sustainable practices into their manufacturing processes. This includes reducing friction loss with dry lubrication

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systems, eliminating lead-based alloys, and adopting eco-friendly casting techniques. As environmental concerns become more pressing, companies are also adhering to international standards such as ISO 14001 and RoHS. These standards support lifecycle tracking, sustainable logistics, and greener product design, which are now integral to innovation strategies across the plain bearing sector.

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CHAPTER 10 COMPANY PROFILES

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