Issue 2/07

ROWA news

NEWS FROM ROWA GROUP

Ladies and gentlemen, business friends,

Another year is once again drawing to a close, a year which the ROWA Group can describe as "good". Even though growth has not been as strong as expected after our record 2006 and the good start made in the first quarter of this year, we can view the anticipated results for the full year with satisfaction. We are expecting Group sales to rise to around EUR 140 million.

It is the younger Group companies that have taken limelight this year. ROWA Group USA and ROWASOL are reporting the highest percentage growth, thereby demonstrating that the decisions to take the plunge into the US market and also to build up a production facility for liquid paints for use by a wide range of customers have both been good investments in the future. Both companies will shortly be making a positive contribution to the Group's financial results and become key elements in our corporate structure.

One very gratifying development has been the strong growth reported by HORST MÜLLER KUNSTSTOFFE, where a new production line went on stream this year and is now into three-shift working. Following optimisation of the manufacturing parameters, the projected level of output is already being exceeded.

ROWA and TRAMACO report growth roughly equivalent to forecasts at below the 10% level. Erection of a new production unit will make it possible to satisfy rising demand for blowing agent compounds. This is scheduled to go on stream towards the end of this year.

ROMIRA is hoping to report attainment of the ambitious target set for 2007, and the changes in the global (and especially the European) market for styrene co-polymers should help them to make further good progress here. The big global players are still continuing to slim down their production lines or even sell off their whole plastics divisions. This causes loss of customer proximity and decay of business relationships that have taken years to build up. Medium-sized suppliers offering flexible, reasonably priced services are essential for large parts of the processing industry, because their readiness to provide solutions to customers' problems without first asking awkward questions about anticipated tonnage is very important and will remain so. The flexibility of ROMIRA and the whole ROWA Group is one of our trump cards.

Our Group will continue to focus its attention and activities on its customers and their needs. Come to us with your problems. Or talk to the specialists on our stand at the K 2007 in Düsseldorf. Tell us what you want and let us advise you. We will be only too glad to help.

Looking forward to your visit.

Sincerely yours
Müller

A fast finish

Three ROMIRA employees pedalled their way through this year's Vattenfall Cyclassics, Europe's all-comers' cycle race held in August in Hamburg. Kai Müller (Management), Tim Krause (Sales) and Thomas Murawski (Purchasing) were among the 20,000 entrants, who could opt for one of three distances ranging from 55 to 155 km. The ROMIRA team decided in favour of the 55 km circuit starting from the Alster in Hamburg and returning to the centre of Hamburg via Pinneberg, Wedel, the Elbchaussee and the Reeperbahn. The three Romira stalwarts shot past the thousands of spectators lining the route to clock up personal best times of 1 hour and 35 minutes at an average speed of over 35 kph. Their unanimous comment: "It was a great experience!"

ROWA Lacquers broadens portfolio to include "furnishing foils"

ROWA is steadily expanding its lacquer portfolio. Following the successful launch of its Digital Printing and Textile Construction ranges, it is now proudly introducing its new lacquer systems for furnishing foils. ROWA Lacquers' new products are tailor-made for satisfying the furniture market's needs for fashionable surface effects. The latest trends were on display earlier this year at the ZOW trade fair in Bad Salzuflen and at the interzum in Cologne – two extremes of either high gloss or dead matt surfaces.
When used on PVC, TPO and TPU foils, ROWA's lacquers fulfil the requirements of the IVK Directive for 3D Foils. The very wide range includes products containing various bonding agents yielding either totally matt or high gloss finishes. They cater for all customers' needs – irrespective of whether these relate to design, appearance, ease of use or value for money. Our latest aqueous-based lacquers make due allowance for environmental compatibility.
Have we whetted your interest? Our flyer listing the products in our new range is fresh off the presses. Ask us to send you a copy. Our ROWA Lacquers team will be glad to answer your detailed questions and give you technical support.

On the Tramaco stand there is a demonstration of the possibilities for finishing furniture surfaces opened up by ROWA Lack's furnishing foils.

ROWA GROUP

Rowa · Tramaco · Romira · Müller · Row

A visit to Jacques Brosseau

This photograph is sure to awaken memories for many of our lacquer customers, especially in France and Belgium. During a visit to France we looked up Jacques Brosseau, the ROWA representative who built up our lacquer business in those countries. As you can see from the photo, Jacques is in the best of health and enjoying retirement in his beautiful house at Cap d'Agde on the Mediterranean coast, where we spent a few pleasant hours with him chatting about old times over several glasses of local red wine.

We wish Jacques Brosseau many more years of happiness and good health and are looking forward to our next visit to the sunny south of France.

Mikel Duscheck, 34, a trained logistics specialist, joined Tramaco GmbH in February 2003 and is responsible for smooth functioning of the company's exports within Europe, and also to some other export markets. He keeps a close watch on all essential details during execution of an order – from availability of the ordered products and confirmation of delivery date to handling the export documents. He has to make sure that regulations in the importing country and regulations on overland, sea and air transport of hazardous goods are complied with. It is not all desk work. He enjoys the regular contacts with customers and sales representatives in Germany and other countries.

Mikel Duscheck's interest in other countries is not confined to his professional functions. He likes to spend his holidays there – but preferably far away from the tourist mainstreams. Together with his wife, he has, for example, made extensive rail tours of Portugal and Thailand. At home, he relaxes by taking long evening walks with his dog.

Innovative lacquer systems for the automotive industry

One of the areas on which work in ROWA's lacquer laboratory has once again focused this year is development of lacquers for the plastic foils and imitation leather used in the automotive industry – especially lacquer systems for the PVC, PVC/ABS and TPO foils on dashboards and interior door parts and for the various types of imitation leather used in vehicle interiors.

Even though ROWA's Lacquers Division already has a broad spectrum of excellent lacquer systems for these purposes, the search still goes on for improved products that will satisfy the automotive industry's steadily growing quality requirements.

ROWA is constantly trying to further enhance the already very good properties of its lacquer systems and pays particular attention to

- reduction of writing effect
- improved resistance to scratching and rubbing
- improved resistance to chemicals
- better cleaning properties

Current development projects include some for totally innovative lacquer systems, such as the new soft-touch formulations based on matt polymers, super-resistant lacquers containing self-wetting binders and systems for lacquer application by IDM transfer.

Nor is ROWA neglecting solvent-based lacquer systems, even though the trend in the automotive industry is currently towards aqueous systems. The company offers highly efficient lacquer systems, both aqueous and solvent-based, for most of the uses listed above. Contact our specialists to obtain more details of ROWA lacquers and their wide range of uses in the automotive industry.

DONGJIN and TRAMACO – A powerful duo

The highly successful cooperation arrangement with the Korean company DONGJIN SEMICHEM CO., LTD. has always been a key pillar of TRAMACO's blowing agent business. Exchange of information and know-how on development, applications technology and marketing has helped DONGJIN, which has production plants in Indonesia and Korea, expand to become one of the largest manufacturers of exothermic blowing agents.

UNICELL® is now the leading global brand of chemical blowing agent. TRAMACO also markets it under this brand name. UNICELL® blowing agents are also a key starting material for TRAMACO's well-known TRACEL® range.

+ + + K 2007 – 24.-31. October · Come and visit us in Hall 8a, Stand B/28 + + +

Chemical blowing agents for plastisols

Tramaco

TRAMACO's chemical blowing agents are widely used in applications involving plastisols. UNICELL® azodicarbonamides and sulfonylhydrazides are the blowing agents most commonly used for vinyl wallpapers and imitation leather. Special products have been developed for other applications.

Our applications technicians will be glad to give you information on new TRACEL® and UNICELL® formulations developed to satisfy special requirements like reduced emission, matting or safety in contact with foodstuffs.

Alliance in central and eastern Europe

If something has proved its worth, it should be well cared for. NRC and blowing agent manufacturer Tramaco share this opinion. NRC has been marketing Tramaco's blowing and nucleating agents with great success in central and eastern Europe for some years now.

Cooperation arrangements between NRC and the ROWA Group, to which Tramaco belongs, have just been expanded to include ROWA's master batches. From now on, NRC will distribute these products in Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, the Slovak Republic, Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia and Romania.

These cooperation arrangements will enable the ROWA Group companies to intensify their marketing activities in central and eastern Europe via NRC's wide-ranging distribution network. NRC will also benefit from this attractive extension of its product portfolio.

ROWA NRC Nordmann, Rassmann *Chemie und mehr – seit 1912.* Tramaco

Liquid Colour Compounds made by ROWASOL

ROWASOL

Although the idea of marketing colours and pigments for the production process in liquid form is not new, liquid colours used to have too many drawbacks. They were difficult to handle, machines and work areas had to be thoroughly cleaned after their use and the quality of the final product tended to be inferior.

All that is now a thing of the past. ROWASOL has developed special liquid colours that overcome these drawbacks. Our customers can now obtain liquid colours which simplify their production processes, are an optimal solution for a wide range of commonly used plastic matrices and guarantee high end product quality. The ROWASOL development team has not simply produced a new type of liquid colour. It has invented complex systems called Liquid Colour Compounds (LCC). ROWASOL will also be glad to give customers advice and support on the selection and setting of the metering equipment for the new LCCs.

Vehicle

A ROWASOL LCC consists of three components – vehicle, colour and function. In view of the many different types of matrices now being used, it will come as no surprise that no single standard vehicle can be used for all types of LCC. ROWASOL carefully analyses each individual application used by a customer to identify the correct vehicle for that application. Because even a change in one of the functional additives can make it necessary to use a different vehicle.

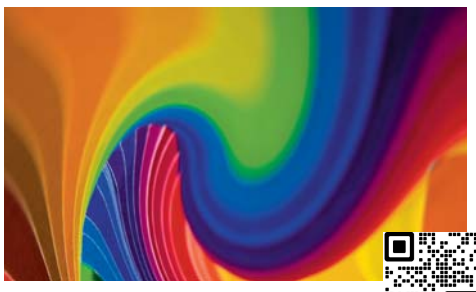
Colour

ROWASOL can offer two options for choice of colouring agent – 'monos' or 'custom colours'. Monos contain only a single colouring agent evenly spread in the vehicle. As this is compatible with all other monos, customers are free to blend these as required to produce their own desired shades. 'Custom colours' are specially developed by ROWASOL to the customer's own specification. When developing LCC formulations, ROWASOL works closely together with leading manufacturers of colouring agents, but it can also work with colouring agents already being used by the customer, if this facilitates the switch to liquid colours for the customer's production processes.

Function

The correct combination of vehicle and colouring agent will ensure a smooth-running colouring operation. But ROWASOL's LCCs also offer the option of blending other additives into the colour compound to give the plastic specific functions, such as UV stability, antistatic or fireproofing properties. As this type of additive is frequently also available in liquid form, it is relatively simple to blend them with LCCs. Careful analysis of the relevant production parameters ensures that ROWASOL LCCs contain a perfectly balanced combination of vehicle, colouring agent and functional additives. The fact that colour and function can now be input into the plastic in a single step reduces the risk of production errors.

ROWASOL's LCCs are no longer only used in extrusion processes. They are also ideal for a wide range of other applications, for example, colouring of artificial fibres. Contact ROWASOL if you are interested in Liquid Colour Compounds. We will be glad to give you more details of their potential uses.



Müller Plastics reports good results

Sales up 35% for second succesive year

Müller Kunststoffe

Müller Plastics continues to forge ahead. After a sales increase of 35% in 2006, its 2007 figures to date have topped this with a sales plus of 38% – mainly through acquisition of new customers and development of new products for a number of different industries. The company has not neglected the capital expenditure on expansion of production and other capacities, without which this sort of growth would be impossible. A large new warehouse for raw materials and finished goods was completed in 2006. This was followed in 2007 by expansion of annual production capacity for the TPE product portfolio by between 4000 and 5000 tons.

Focus on innovations and regenerative raw materials

The company's highly creative development team has enabled it to market successful systems to meet customers' constantly changing needs - like its innovative LIFOFLEX range for PA bonded laminates which have gained it several new satisfied customers. Development of products from regenerative raw materials is now an integral part of Müller's development policy, which attaches great importance to product durability, environmental compatibility and responsible care. This finds its expression mainly in the use of natural cork and natural fibres in soft compounds. A high level of input is also going into development of novel leather compounds, for which expansion of production capacity at the main factory is currently planned.

Higher volume and value sales of LIFOBATCH colour and additive master batches are expected from the decision to intensify

activities for acquisition of new customers for PVC and TPU master batches.

High level of customer satisfaction

Müller Plastics is constantly striving to keep its customer service at top scratch. Its most recent survey revealed a customer satisfaction rate of 93.5 %. The survey included sections on technical service, compliance with delivery dates, order processing, price, reaction to complaints and friendliness.

This result is good, but it will not prevent Müller Plastics from trying to make its service even better and to develop intelligent new products that will enhance the success of its customers.

Thermoplastic elastomers (TPE) with antimicrobial protection

Müller Kunststoffe

Modern consumers attach great importance to well-being, safety and hygiene and expect products available on the market to satisfy these requirements. These quality standards apply to a wide range of plastic products.

To meet these customer needs, Müller Plastics has developed ready-to-use granules containing antimicrobial additives. An antimicrobial substance kills or inactivates micro-organisms or reduces their infectiousness and/or reproductive capability. When used in plastic products, these substances prevent odour development and growth of algae, bacteria and fungus. The unique combination of antimicrobial substances used in plastics manufactured by Müller Lichtenfels ensures long-term protection against harmful microbes and moulds and can in many cases prolong the useful life of the final product. This yields both economical and ecological benefits by saving natural resources.

These products can be used in the food and leisure industries, for swimming pools and sanitary installations and in the consumer care sector.

Development of these products has been geared to meet customers' specific needs and there is now a wide selection of antimicrobially protected plastics available, including TPE, TPU and soft PVC. Existing formulations can also be modified to include antimicrobial additives.

Müller Plastics takes great care to select the best antimicrobial substance for a given type of plastic and application. Plastics containing these substances are safe to use and non-injurious to man or animals. All materi-

als have been thoroughly tested for safety in the planned area of application. They have been approved by the US Food and Drug Authority (FDA) and have been classified for many years as safe for contact with human beings. Müller can also provide antimicrobial plastics approved for direct contact with foodstuffs.
Rely on us to provide the correct solution. We offer our customers comprehensive support ranging from general advice on development and production questions to assistance in design of test procedures.

Thermoplastic substances with antistatic and conductive properties

Müller Kunststoffe

Plastics have a variety of electrical and dielectric properties depending on their chemical composition and on whether they have solidified into amorphous or crystalline form. The great majority have an amorphous structure giving them electricity-insulating properties. Although this makes them very useful for insulating electrical wiring, appliances and other equipment, it is not always an advantage. Build-up of electrostatic charge is undesirable in plastics used in motor vehicles and lifestyle products.

This can best be illustrated by two examples. Firstly, plastic surfaces tend to take up an electrostatic charge when rubbed with a cleaning cloth. This makes them prone to attraction and accumulation of the dust suspended in the surrounding atmosphere. The result is that the surface quickly looks just as unsightly as it did before it was cleaned. Secondly, plastic components or semi-manufactures used in industry tend to cause problems by sticking to the sides of storage containers or to each other.

Many technical plastics are specially treated or formulated to give them antistatic properties. These properties are usually 'migratory' but can also be permanent in some cases. The migratory type are so named because they migrate at the surfaces and combine with the moisture in the atmosphere to form a paper-thin conductive film which reduces surface resistivity. The efficacy of their antistatic properties varies according to the article's mobility and the level of atmospheric humidity. The same applies to duration of the antistatic properties which can in some cases last for years, but often declines within a few months.

In contrast, plastics with permanent antistatic properties contain a built-in conductive substance forming a network through which the surface electrostatic charge can dissipate quickly. This type has two main advantages. Firstly, its function is not affected by atmospheric humidity. Secondly, the rigid network prevents migration of the conductive substance and the antistatic properties are consequently longer-lasting. Irrespective of whether the antistatic properties are permanent or migratory, the substance used to generate them is heavily dependent on polymer type. No single substance can be used to make all polymers antistatic.

The fillers currently incorporated into plastic formulations to give make them conductive include metal powders and fibres, graphite, carbon black, carbon fibres and, more recently, carbon nanotubules. The important thing is to ensure that the proportion of filler attains or exceeds the percolation point. This is the point where the particles of the substance come into contact with each other to create electrically conductive circuits in the polymer matrix. The conductive properties tend to be sporadic if this point is not reached. Once the percolation point has been exceeded, there is no further significant improvement in conductivity. The level of the percolation point varies according to the type of filler used. Whereas the proportion can be as high as 60% with some metal powders, as little as 5% may suffice in the cases of conductive grades of carbon black. One drawback of these types of permanent antistatic agent is their colour, which severely limits colourability of the plastic.

Müller Plastics uses several antistatic agents, including some suitable for TPE-S and TPU products intended for use in various types of applications. Compounds can not only be formulated to give them intrinsic antistatic properties. In some cases, antistatic agents are available as master batches which offer the option of making products antistatic at a later stage. Conductive compounds are also available.
Please do not hesitate to ask us for further details.

Permanently antistatic PC/ASA blends for automotive industry

ROMIRA TECHNISCHE KUNSTSTOFFE

PC/ASA has a number of very useful properties. Parts made of this outstanding polymer blend have the following major advantages:

1. high impact resistance
2. dimensional stability under heat
3. high rigidity
4. good resistance to weather and UV radiation
5. good scratch resistance
6. low emission rate in vehicle interiors

It is because of these attractive properties that PC/ASA blends bare widely used for internal and external car components – for example, vanity mirror frames and covers (Fig. 1), mountings and

Fig. 1: Vanity mirror frame and slide cover made of Romiloy 6020 (PC/ASA)

frames for rear-view mirrors, sun screen components, covers of child-seat anchorages, frames of rear-view mirrors and boot handles.

Although colour fastness is very important, dust-repellent properties are becoming increasingly significant in assessment of suitability of plastic components for vehicle interiors. Dust accumulation caused by electrostatic charge is now a thing of the past with Romira's latest development. Its antistatic properties do not disappear in the first few months of a vehicle's life. They outlast the vehicle itself.

Normal PC/ASA blends are not electrically conductive and have a surface resistance of between 10^{15} and 10^{16} ohm. Components made of them become electrically charged when rubbed, and this causes accumulation of dust on their surfaces. Conventional PC/ASA blends have failed to meet the needs of the automotive industry, because modern car buyers insist on clean, dust-free vehicle interiors. This meant that development of a permanently antistatic PC/ASA was a must for Romira with its high reputation as a developer and manufacturer of special polymer blends.

The first development brought to the market was Romiloy 6020 UV AS. Although this product has similar mechanical properties to conventional PC/ASA blends, its antistatic properties are of limited duration. They weaken noticeably after 4 months and disappear altogether over the years.

The latest development, Romiloy PC/ASA EXP 1402, has the required profile and solves the dust accumulation problem. It has a low surface resistance of 10^{10}-^{11} ohm and is permanently antistatic until the end of the product's service life.

The automotive industry can now use a PC/ASA combining all the benefits of colour fastness, low emissions and good mechanical performance with permanent antistatic properties. And there is no need for any further surface treatment when the components emerge from injection moulding.

Fig. 2 demonstrates the difference in dissipation of friction-induced electrostatic charge in Romiloy PC/ASA EXP 1402 and conventional PC/ASA with and without AS. It shows how quickly the charge dissipates in Romiloy PC/ASA EXP 1402, where it is initially very weak, rapidly starts to decline and has gone within one hour. The charge accumulating in PC/ASA with and without AS is roughly 10 times stronger. It remains constant for 2 hours in PC/ASA without AS, which gives that product strong dust-attraction properties. Although the charge in PC/ASA with AS starts to dissipate after one hour, it is many times higher than in Romiloy PC/ASA EXP 1402 and has still not completely disappeared after 24 hours. PC/ASA with AS can be claimed to have antistatic properties, but these are much less effective than those of Romiloy PC/ASA EXP 1402. The test results show clearly that components made of Romiloy PC/ASA EXP 1402 take up no significant electrostatic charge and consequently do not attract dust.

The caps of a spectacles storage compartment made of PC/ASA 1402 (Fig. 3) have high impact resistance and comply with the DIN 53497

Fig. 3: Spectacles compartment made of permanently antistatic Romiloy EXP 1402 (PC/ASA)

specification for stability of shape after exposure to heat at 120° C for 24 hours. After the test, these components retained their original shape. They also remained fully functional after the climate change test, showing no cracks or deformation after storage at -40°C for 24 hours. Romiloy PC/ASA EXP 1402 also complies with the automotive industry's emission requirements.

Romiloy 14022 (PC/ASA), which presents no processing problems, is ideal for components requiring permanent antistatic properties installed in vehicle interiors.

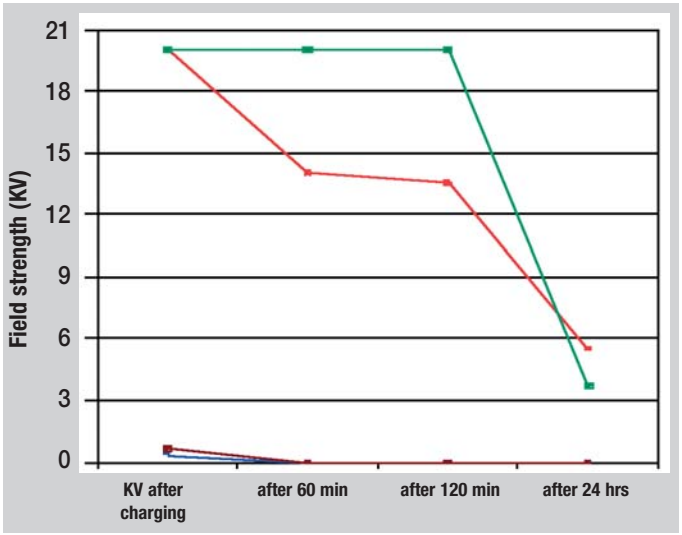


Fig. 2:
Time curve of dissipation of electrostatic charge

Test after generation of friction-induced charge with micro-fibre cloth

Environmental conditions:
components stored at 21°C/50% RH for 48 hours
Relative humidity at time of measurement: 33.5%RH

- *Sunshade slide cover made of PC/ASA EXP 1402*
- *Sunshade slide cover made of PC/ASA with AS*
- *Sunshade slide cover made of ASA/PC without AS*
- *Spectacles compartment made of PC/ASA EXP 1402*

High-precision colouring of polycarbonate

ROMIRA TECHNISCHE KUNSTSTOFFE

The modern world could scarcely exist without coloured plastic products. There are two types pf process for colouring plastic components. They can be made either with already coloured granules, or uncoloured granules are processed with a colour master batch. The first of these options allows the compounder to mix various types of additive, e.g. pigments, antioxidants. UV stabilisers, mould release aids or antistatic agents, with the coloured granules. In the case of the second option the plastic and the master batch are fused in the moulding machine or the extruder before the components are manufactured. Manufacture of coloured articles with this process can in some cases be difficult.

It is well-known that accurate colouring of transparent or translucent polycarbonate (PC) by addition of master batches is complicated, even for experienced compounders, who need a lot of know-how to produce satisfactory colour results. These can be adversely affected by inadequate thermostability of the PC, the pigments and the other additives, incompatibility of the PC and the additives, the temperature of the coloured PC compound in the extruder and the shearing action of the screws.

Romira GmbH and Rowa GmbH, the manufacturer of the masterbatch, have many years' experience in this field. Romira markets a transparent, coloured PC under the brand name Rotec PC that is widely used in the electrical, electronic and IT sectors. For example, white and blue translucent Rotec PC 7017 UV is used in high-quality intercom systems. Rotec PC is also used for lamp shades and globes, wall socket frames and DSL box covers. Rotec PC is ideal for these kinds of components which need to be coloured very accurately.

Modern intercom system manufactured by S. Siedle & Söhne of Furtwangen made of translucent white Rotec PC 7017 UV

Special master batch for TPU textile foils

The automotive industry imposes extremely high demands on the plastics used in its products. Those permanently visible in vehicle interiors have to do more than just function correctly. Design, i.e. visual and tactile properties, are equally important. ROWA Masterbatch can offer its customers individual master batches for a wide range of target profiles, for example, in collaboration with Caplast GmbH, an expert in the field of special, extrusion-coated products. This company has developed a textile-reinforced TPU foil for use in vehicle interiors, e.g. as bulkhead cladding to improve protection against skull injury in accidents where airbags are released. ROWA's specific master batch for this product gives it high resistance to scratching and UV radiation. It also makes the TPU foil and the final product agreeable to the touch. The textile-reinforced foil made of Desmopan®, a thermoplastic TPU from Bayer MaterialScience and its underside has a sprayed thermoplastic coating. ROWA master batches make it possible to produce foils with brightly coloured surfaces. Absence of plasticisers and solvents makes them both ecologically safe and safe to work with. They satisfy the highest design and functional standards.

ROWA Masterbatch is the recommended by Bayer MaterialScience AG as supplier of master batches for aliphatic TPU.

TPU foil with sprayed thermoplastic coating on the underside

Interview with Christian Brouwers, Deputy Manager of Rowa GmbH's Masterbatch Division

"Pioneering role with critical technical components"

Plastics used in vehicle interiors must obviously comply with mechanical and thermal specifications. But nowadays they are also increasingly expected to meet aesthetic requirements. "We see ourselves as technological pioneers working closely together with our customers to produce solutions to their problems, especially when these involve critical technical components", explained Christian Brouwers, Deputy Manager of Rowa GmbH's Masterbatch Division during an interview with K-ZEITUNG.

K-ZEITUNG: Mr. Brouwers, you have succeeded in building up a useful business with your custom-made colour master batches for technical plastics. What is so special about your product range for the automotive industry?

Brouwers: A wide variety of plastics with varying property profiles are used in vehicle interiors. These obviously have to comply with mechanical and thermal specifications, but they must nowa

meet aesthetic requirements. These include uniform, high-quality colour (metamer-free) in all components and materials, antistatic properties to prevent dust attraction, suitability for galvanisation where necessary, UV stability etc. etc. The synergies available in the Rowa Group enable us to adopt a multiple approach to the development of innovative solutions to customers' problems. Our support helps these customers to get to the market quickly with the results of these innovations.

K-ZEITUNG: With what sort of applications can you claim to have experience of very special value?

Brouwers: We see ourselves as technological pioneers working closely together with our customers to produce solutions to their problems, especially when these involve critical technical components. With cars, these are all the visible components in the interior that have to meet special aesthetic and mechanical requirements. We have a mass of experience in serial manufacture of this type of component with just about all European motor vehicle manufacturers and with all relevant plastics (PP, ABS, ABS/PC, ABS/PA, PS/PPE, ASA, ASA/PC, PA, POM, PBT, TPU) with and without additives to enhance resistance to UV exposure. The synergies with our affiliated company Müller Plastics also give us access to valuable know-how and serial manufacturing experience in multi-component applications with TPE.

K-ZEITUNG: Where do you see new fields of application for your products in the future?

Brouwers: We see big new uses for aliphatic TPU for claddings in vehicle interiors. We, as manufacturers of master batches, are working closely together with Bayer MaterialScience AG on a number of highly interesting projects, from which we have accumulated a lot of valuable know-how. This new type of material has tactile, scratch-resistant and UV-stable properties that facilitate creation of highly attractive vehicle interiors at relatively low cost. The new material and the processing options that it offers will give our customers the opportunity to market products with a genuine edge on those of their competitors.
IR-reflecting master batches are another very interesting Rowa development. These help to prolong useful life and UV stability of components by reducing their surface temperature. What may be even more important is that they help to keep temperature in vehicle interiors lower, thereby reducing the load on air-conditioning units and, consequently, fuel consumption.

K-ZEITUNG: Is nanotechnology of interest to you and have you developed any products in this field?

Brouwers: This new technology is of great interest, not only for Masterbatch Division, but for the whole Group and we are putting enormous efforts into developing it. But we are not expecting to have any products ready for marketing in the near future.

K-ZEITUNG: In which markets are you active at present, do you have expansion plans, are you still focused on Europe or are you casting an eye on new markets, for example, Asia?

Brouwers: In the Masterbatch Division we are concentrating on our core skills – development ability, technological leadership in the fields of materials and manufacturing know-how, and also favourable cost profiles in our main fields of activity. As far as expansion plans are concerned, we are working hard at strengthening our marketing organisation in eastern and south-eastern Europe, so that we can bring our advisory services there up to our normal high European standards. We are cooperating closely with our parent company NRC, a leading chemicals trader, which already has a strong organisation in these countries. At the same time, the Group is actively planning expansion of its activities beyond Europe and NAFTA and into Asia. You will understand that I cannot say any more at present, but will be glad to give you more details when the time is ripe.

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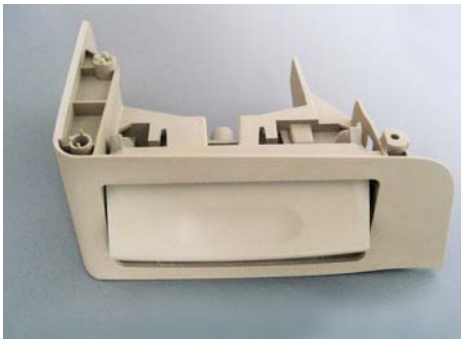
The interview has been published
in the K-Zeitung 18/07 on 2007-09-17.

Roller blind made of TPU

A 2-K injection moulding (TPE + ABS/PC)



Ashtray with lid

Published by: ROWA Group
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Graphic Design: Winneberger & Haacker

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