



Trexel signs deal to offer Ono Sangyo technology in MuCell molded parts

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PLASTICS NEWS STAFF

DÜSSELDORF, GERMANY (Oct. 31, 7:10 a.m. ET) -- At 2010, Trexel Inc., supplier of the MuCell microcellular foaming technology, announced a global licensing agreement with Ono Sangyo Co. Ltd. -- promoting MuCell for injection molding parts with Class-A/high-gloss surface finish.

Trexel also kicked off a partnership with a program to train MuCell-certified mold-makers, partnering with Michigan tool maker Proper Group International Inc.

Trexel and Ono Sangyo have worked together for some time. The new deal, announced at a news conference Oct. 30 during the K show, means that Ono Sangyo's technology, called Rapid Heat Cycle Molding (RHCM), is included in the price of the MuCell technology, said Stephan Braig, Trexel's president and CEO.

Braig said MuCell and RHCM work well together.

Ono Sangyo is a Tokyo-based injection molding company that developed the RHCM process, and sells it to other molders. RHCM uses elevated mold temperatures during the injection cycle, followed by rapid cooling of the mold.

MuCell equipment adds microscopic bubbles to the melt by bringing nitrogen gas to a supercritical state. The gas has properties of both a liquid and a gas, and when the pressure suddenly drops when the melt exits the barrel, the bubbles get released inside the mold. Benefits of the low-pressure MuCell process include shorter cycle times, lower melt viscosity and parts with no warping.

Braig said RHCM helps MuCell overcome issues with surface finish, enabling MuCell to target more automotive applications.

In the mold training news, Braig said Trexel is installing MuCell systems on several injection presses at Proper Group in Warren, Mich., creating a MuCell Trial and Development Center. Braig said it would begin operations in early 2011.

The center will enable automotive customers conduct trials and run demonstration programs. Another goal is to develop training methods that will lead to a MuCell certification program, starting with tool designers and engineers from Proper Group.

Braig, the former top executive of Engel Machinery Inc., the injection press maker's North American operation, became Trexel's president and CEO in April. He said the agreement with Proper Group is part of a long-term strategy to move MuCell from a niche status to a mainstream process.

"We anticipate forming strategic partnerships like this around the globe," Braig said. "We're currently in discussions with other potential partners in Europe and Asia, and anticipate the formation of new strategic partnerships going forward in the coming months."

At the news conference, Braig said that an automaker is specifying MuCell for some parts, but he declined to identify the car maker.

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