

Global market review of vehicle seating

In the middle of last year, just-auto published research on vehicle seating and now that the global automotive market has been significantly affected by the economic downturn, the forecast data has been revised.

The updated global market review of vehicle seating now provides volume and value forecast data to 2016.

In addition, and given the sheer volatility of the global economy at present, "expected", "best-case" and "worst-case" scenario data have been set out.

Although modern car seats are more comfortable and safer than ever before, flexibility, comfort and safety continue to be the main drivers of this business.

Original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are demanding greater differentiation in their seat designs, customers want more luxury such as cooling and heating, and ergonomists understand much more about what the human frame needs to be comfortable.

It is clear that interiors must appeal to all kinds of people. A great deal of work is focused on producing different seat fabrics, increasing levels of comfort, a greater selection of colours and trims along with built-in fragrances.

This updated research provides an overview of the vehicle seating industry, and takes a look at the trends affecting the sector.

It offers top level market fitment, volume and value forecasts up to 2016, and also has exclusive interviews with executives at Intier Automotive Seating and Johnson Controls.

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JCI uses MuCell on Mercedes-Benz door

JOHNSON Controls has successfully employed the MuCell process in conjunction with other advanced technologies to produce the door panel carrier for the Mercedes-Benz E-Class to win the Society of Plastics Engineers Automotive Interiors Award.

The MuCell microcellular foam technology from Trexel is a complete process and equipment technology that enables the production of plastic parts.

The technology involves the use of precisely metered quantities of atmospheric gases (nitrogen or carbon dioxide) in any of the three most common thermoplastic conversion processes (injection moulding, extrusion and blow moulding) to create millions of nearly invisible microcells in the end product.

Manufacturers claim the creation of these microcellular structures brings a wide range of benefits including reduced weight, reduced material usage and reduced production costs.

The MuCell process is primarily employed in the injection moulding process to produce lower cost precision parts with a consistently high quality and exceptional dimensional stability, where foaming has not histor-

ically been deployed.

Johnson Controls said the MuCell process not only allowed for significant weight savings, as well as a thinner wall design for the door panel, but also provided improved dimensional stability while reducing cycle times.

The company was able to use low injection pressures by using the MuCell process to inject foamed material behind a polypropylene thin film in a single injection step, thereby eliminating problems associated with a second processing step.

Johnson Controls was able to mould thinner wall sections in the map pocket, while meeting all performance specifications.

By using MuCell technology, the company said it gained several advantages: thinner wall construction through lower resin viscosity; rib to wall ratios of 1:1 thereby reinforcing thinner wall construction without creating sink marks; and the elimination of requiring the application of pack and hold pressure with high clamp tonnage requirement, thereby creating a friendlier environment for in-mould decorating.

www.johnsoncontrols.com
www.trexel.com



Johnson Controls has successfully employed the MuCell process in conjunction with other advanced technologies to produce the door panel carrier for the Mercedes-Benz E-Class