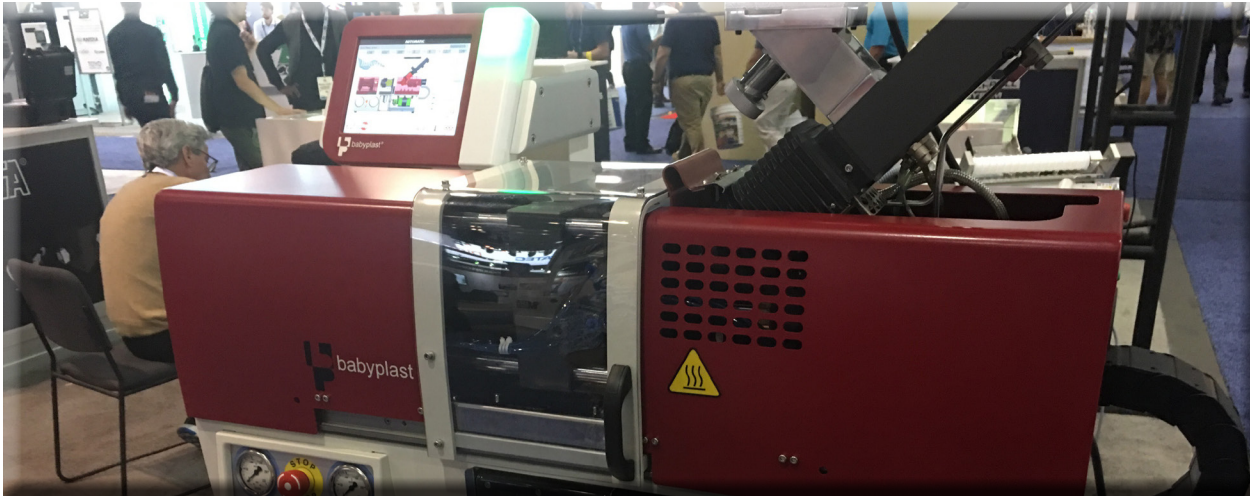


Investing in the Customer - Part II

By Stephen Hannemann



Approximately 56 million tons of plastic resins are processed annually in the U.S. The range of products produced is nearly incomprehensible. No other material in human history has had a more profound impact on our daily lives. From medical devices and supplies to appliances, weight reducing auto components, containers, construction and electrical components, consumer products, packaging, the list continues to the limits of our imaginations.



Last issue I wrote about 3D Plastics having invested in their customers by purchasing a new injection molding press to improve productivity. Continuing to invest, 3D sent a contingent of key people in May to the National Plastics Exposition, (NPE), in Orlando, FL. Held only once every 3 years, NPE is the world's largest plastics industry trade show with 1.2 million sq. ft. of exhibits showcasing the latest equipment and plastic production technology. 3D's mission was to keep abreast of the latest injection molding equipment and production trends, and learn how they can incorporate them into their operation to further support their customers' requirements and future growth. In other words, create a shopping list.

Kelly Dundas, Vice president at 3D,

said there was much to see and several pieces of equipment caught his eye. First on the list was a small seven ton machine that would help speed production of small parts and free up capacity for their larger machines. The new addition would speed along 3D's volume of optical and laser components and HO gauge slot car parts.

Second on the list might be a doser system. A doser is a mechanism to meter some form of compound to the resin during the molding

process i.e. structural foam or colorant. Due to buying minimums, purchasing pre-colored resin has become cost prohibitive for smaller production runs. A doser allows you to accurately meter a custom color for consistent results. For a job shop, that is a huge factor in providing color versatility for customers who need only a few thousand parts annually. 3D does custom color matching but a doser would greatly streamline the process.

Third on the list, 3D is already using robots for part demolding but what left a lasting impression was one exhibitor's use of robots in the molding process itself, and for assembly of small parts. 3D is actively involved in secondary ops and robotic assembly equipment could bolster value added operations for their customers.

For more information or to receive a quote on your next molding program, contact either Lee Dundas, Jr., leed@3d-plastics.com, Kelly Dundas, kellyd@3d-plastics.com, Elliott Dundas, elliottd@3d-plastics.com, or call 503.537.0979. **For the state of Washington, contact Stephen Hannemann at stephen@smhinc.com, or call 425.501.7342.**

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