SPECIAL REPORT Silicone

Albright upgrades website, restructures operations

By Jennifer Karpus
Rubber & Plastics News Staff

LEOMINSTER, Mass.—Albright Technologies Inc. has started the year with various changes, including an upgraded website, restructuring its organization and enhancing capacity.

The upgraded website, www.albright1.com—which officially launched in February—was designed utilizing the latest WordPress technology to create a site compatible with popular browsers and mobile devices. These efforts will enhance the users experience through streamlined content, videos and photographs, and refined menu options, Albright said.

"Customers can send us their (request for quotes) with models and drawings of their silicone parts," Ryan Taylor, director of sales and marketing at Albright, said in an email.

Additionally, customers also can submit forms to receive Albright's silicone molding manual and silicone durometer samples, which give a potential customer an idea of what each durometer of material feels like and reacts.


Taylor

Other features of the website include visitors having the capability to select social media links to share content, and the upgraded website will provide visitors with extensive product and service information regarding the company's silicone prototyping and low-volume production molding services.

"The launch of our new website will enhance our visitors' user experience," Taylor said in a press release. "We anticipate that our web visitors will rapidly find the content that they require with our new site."

David Comeau, president and founder, agreed, saying, "Our latest rendition of the Albright1.com site offers the latest developments in web design technology. ... These developments are something all of our Albright1.com visitors can benefit from."

Restructuring

Besides the upgraded website, Albright also recently announced a restructuring to its organization following a comprehensive evaluation of its work force.

The restructuring will position the company to be better suited to the needs of the current silicone molding market.

Matthew Bont has been promoted from quality manager and senior project engineer positions to director of operations. Bont has been with Albright for seven years, and the firm said he has a strong understanding of the silicone market, which he will be able to utilize to enhance the business.

"Promoting Matthew Bont to director of operations will enhance our business in terms of production scheduling, implementation of new technologies, and the creation of new procedures and policies for day-to-day operations," said Comeau.

Taylor also was recently promoted to his position of director of sales and marketing, previously serving as business development specialist.

"Ryan's years of field sales, sales management and internet marketing experience at his previous employ make him an excellent choice to be our director of sales and marketing," Comeau said.

After initially retiring at the end of December 2012, Comeau has returned to lead the organization.

"He came back as he grew bored with retirement and had previously enjoyed being hands-on with the company," Taylor said. "Most importantly, though, he wanted to change the company model, increase our service offerings and increase sales at a faster pace."

Jeff Thumm was the previous president.


RPN photos by Jennifer Karpus

Albright Technologies displays a variety of products at its booth during the recent MD&M West show in Anaheim.

Injection molding

Albright Technologies started offering silicone injection molding when it installed its clean room in 2009, but has recently enhanced its capacity to do so.

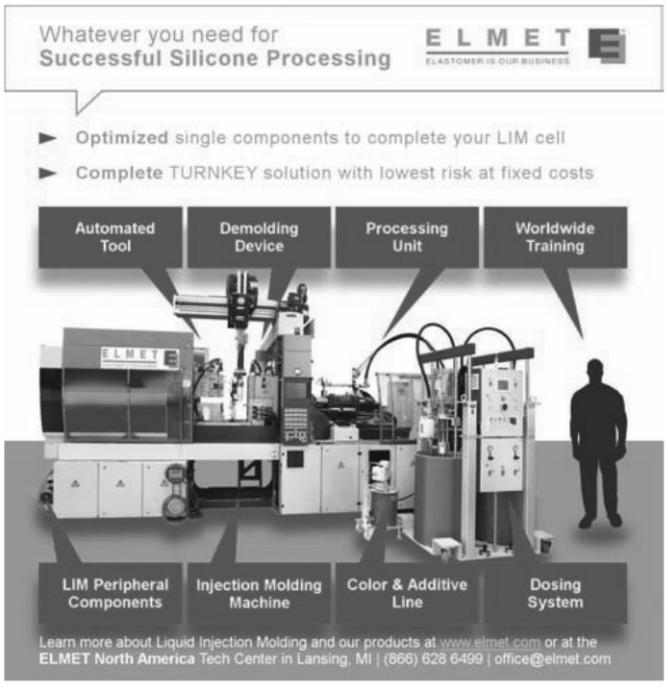
"Since our primary focus has been prototyping, injection has started out slowly," Taylor said, "but in order to better serve our customers, we made the strategic decision to push more injection molding tooling and injection molding services for customers requiring up to 100,000 units per year and with parts suitable for this process."

Albright provides controlled environment room (ISO Class 7) injection molding services on its Arburg and Engel silicone injection molding presses, which provides medical and pharmaceutical customers with low-volume production molding of their medical devices.

Some of the parts the company prototype do not lend themselves to injection molding, he said, and are best suited for compression molding.

Albright has seen injection molding, especially in its clean room, expand significantly in 2015, Taylor said.

"Restructuring our business, implementing new marketing and sales strategies, and continuing to add new capabilities will enhance Albright and bring it to the next level." Taylor said. "We believe that 2015 will be a year of tremendous growth for us."



Gelest launches two products

By Chris Sweeney
Rubber & Plastics News Staff

MORRISVILLE, Pa.—Gelest Inc. has released two new hydrophilic modifiers for silicones.

The new products, MCS-VX15 and MCS-VF14, were designed to help formulators find a way to overcome the intrinsic hydrophobicity of silicones, said Ed Kimble, Gelest product manager for silicones. The firm wanted to find a way to make a long-term surface modification to a room-temperature-vulcanized silicone so that water would wet out on the surface better than it would on a traditional RTV.

Both products were released within the last six months, Gelest said.

Kimble said the inherent hydrophobicity of silicones can cause a real issue in applications where the device comes in contact with liquid, such as medical devices or micro fluidic devices.

"We're looking to get around some of the intrinsic properties of silicones," Kimble said. "Silicones by nature are extremely hydrophobic and silicone elastomers being a downstream product of these, that can cause some problems."

Gelest wanted to build this technology into these kinds of materials so they have a reactive, hydrophilic silicone additive for silicone RTVs that gives a long-term hydrophilic effect on the surface, without any post-cure surface treatments.

MCS-VX15 and MCS-VF14 consist of different structures to give the formulator more options catered to their liking.

"What we wanted to do was give the formulator a chance to take whatever silicone RTV they're using now—whatever silicone elastomer formulation that they already have on their shelf, that they like to use and have experience with—and have an additive for those times when they want to reduce the hydrophobicity and make the material hydrophilic," Kimble said.

"This was a chance for us to bring two different modality functionalities as a way for different chemists and engineers to look at these materials and think what else they may want to do with them."

The materials took about a year to develop and Kimble said the firm has focused on developing highly specialized silicone monomers for different applications and industries as part of a larger program for the last 10 years. The firm operates out of a manufacturing facility in Morrisville, just outside of Philadelphia.

"We've received some very positive feedback from the materials," Kimble said. "This is outside the norm of what people were expecting. People like the idea of having a completely reactive modality that can give them the properties that they desire without having to do anything additional. It's the same work they'd be doing traditionally."