



## 320 Guests at ENGEL Automotive Conference

# Leading Experts Gaze into the Future

**Schwertberg/Austria – June 2009. To be able to drive innovation, you need to know the future trends. This is the offer that ENGEL made to its customers in the automotive industry against the backdrop of trend.scaut – The automotive conference, 26 May 2009 in St. Valentin. Leading experts from OEMs and suppliers talked about the future role of plastics in the automotive industry. More than 320 guests from virtually every global player in the industry took this opportunity to talk about the latest trends.**

Particularly in times of change, it is useful to switch on your headlamps and look ahead. It will be a completely new ball game, and the industry will be in a different position. Which OEMs and suppliers will be on the winning team, and which will be on the losing team? And which are the next generation technology niches that you should be looking to enter? Answers to these vital questions were provided by the keynote speaker at trend.scaut, Helmut Becker, former Chief Economist with BMW and now the Head of the Institute for Economic Analysis and Communication. This was followed by four round table discussions on the role of plastics in tomorrow's vehicles.

- **The Plastics in Structural Components discussion**, which was chaired by Rudolf Stauber - Head of Department for Operational Stability and Materials at BMW came to the conclusion that we will be seeing more and more carbon fibre parts within the next two or three vehicle generations, although it is still necessary for process technologies to catch up with the pace of development.
- The **Interior Parts Group** – chaired by Michael Whitens, Body Interior Chief Engineer Cockpit/Trim/Restraints, Ford USA, sees polypropylene as the material of the future - and without coating, if possible.



- The **Lighting Technology** experts, chaired by Thomas Manth, Managing Director Odelo LED GmbH Germany, see major economic potential for LED-based interior lighting today. And the path has already been laid down for LED technology in exterior lighting. Although this technology is expensive right now, it is just a question of time until LEDs conquer the mid-price segment.
- The participants in the **Alternative Drive Technology** discussion, which was chaired by Johann Grabenweger – Head of Production, Logistics, Purchasing with KHS AG, envisage the introduction of electrically powered vehicles by OEMs in the next two or three generations at the earliest. In contrast to this, lateral entrants from other branches of industry who focus their development resources on e-vehicles could enter the market within just a few years thus forcing classic OEMs out of the automotive industry.

All four discussion groups independently concluded that plastics will play a decisive role in the car of the future, whether in the form of lightweight carbon fibre construction of structural components, PP in interiors, plastic lenses for LED applications, or technical moulding in and around the electric vehicle's batteries.

In addition to this, Shrinivas Sharangpani, who is responsible for systematic development and implementation of innovations at Tata Motors as Tata's Head of Learning Center, talked about the "Indian Approach" – the Art of Minimalism. His talk focused on the development of the "low-budget" car, the Tata Nano.

"All told trend.scaut provided a comprehensive outlook of the future plastic components in automobiles. The consensus reached between OEMs, suppliers and raw material producers in the discussion groups clearly shows the very high innovative potential but also that some solutions will not be available for another two or three automobile generations. Despite this, it is particularly important in our times to not just focus on solving existing problems, but to think about tomorrow and prepare for the future. If you ask me, I think we did a fantastic job with this event", says Dr. Peter Neumann.



Bild 1: With the help of disassembled car parts the experts discussed the future of plastics in the automotive industry.



Bild 1: About 320 guests visited the ENGEL trend.scout event.



Bild 3: One of the numerous highlights was the demonstration of disassembled car parts.

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