

THE MOLDING BLOG



The Molding Blog features commentary focusing on plastics, molding technologies, and additive manufacturing. Photo shows the Solar Impulse, an aircraft concept using molding and other technologies from Solvay and Bayer.

Hats Off to Mack Molding and Jeff Somple

Posted on September 3, 2014 by [Doug Smock](#)

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In the 1980s, one of the most active and interesting groups in plastics was the Structural Plastics Division of the Society of the Plastics Industry. It was great, in part, because it was processor-led and had a very active and well-done design competition.

Most of the focus was on big parts for the business equipment market, and one of the leading players was a company called Mack Molding. As recently as 15 years ago, three companies (Sun Microsystems, HP, and Xerox) represented about three-fourths of Mack's business. Corporate-wide supply management initiatives at Fortune 500 companies took hold at that time and moved that type of business to low-cost country sources while also ushering in other changes such as reverse electronic auctions. Another factor was the dot-com crash.

The Structural Plastics Division blew up quickly, and so did processors with inflexible business models.

Many smart molders re-invented themselves. Market focus shifted to medical or high-value niches. Instead of being ship-and-shoot molders focused on hourly rates, they became problem solvers for big customers. That often meant transformation from molder to contract manufacturer where metal and plastic process were both performed, and processors took over the whole manufacturing supply chain, including part purchasing.

Mack was one of those companies, and I followed its progress in almost annual meetings with Mack executive Jeff Somple at medical manufacturing meetings on the West Coast. Congratulations to Jeff, who this week was named president of all of Mack Molding.



About Doug Smock

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