

Proper Group Follows Up Technology Show With Special Event for GM Executives

It's always nice to have the chance to show off just what you can do, and that's what the people at the Warren-based company Proper Group International did when they held a Technology Day for GM executives.

The demonstration was held Aug. 1, and, said Vice President Joe Grippe, it grew out of the technology day the company put on earlier in the spring.

"Our Aug. 1 event was a good one," Grippe said. "It was a follow-up to the technology show we held a few months ago in our Advanced Technology Center in Warren."

"We displayed some of our inductive heating for injection molds technology and composite tools, as well as our rapid cooling technology."

Grippe said that GM was among the companies that sent representatives to the spring demonstration. They liked what they saw so Proper Group International held the special showing of technology for GM executives on Aug. 1.

"These demonstrations are held for the purpose of showing the benefits of our services," Grippe said. "These benefits include an excellent surface finish as well as the ability to provide 'wall molding' to lightweight parts."

Grippe said wall molding is used in the injection molding process.

"We are one of the largest injection mold makers in North America," Grippe said. "We also have a facility that makes injection molding to order. We like to hold three or four shows a year to show off the technology we use and the partners we engage with."

Business has been good, Grippe said. "By using the latest production technologies," he said, "the company is able to develop different business opportunities for ourselves and for our customers to produce lightweight parts."

That's important, Grippe said, because with new, stricter mileage requirements coming down the road, automakers have to lose vehicle weight any way they can.

By using new technology provided by companies like Roc Tools, Proper is able to make parts thinner without losing needed strength. Companies that help OEMs like GM reduce weight in vehicles have a better chance of doing business with them in these competitive times, Grippe said. That means investing in new manufacturing techniques and equipment.

One way to do this is to mold parts that won't require painting, Grippe said.

"Some molded parts get painted because of surface flaws," Grippe said. "These flaws need to

be covered with paint. The tools we use to make the parts use high heat to mold the parts by extending the material flow and then the molded parts themselves can achieve a high-gloss finish or a low-gloss finish. This is done by mimicking the tool surface."

That was what his company was showing the more than 50 GM executives who visited the Proper Group show on Aug 1, Grippe said.

"It's exciting to be able to show people what we can do for them," Grippe said. "The auto industry is heating up and we're looking for ways to be a part of that growth."



GM executives check out Proper Group's injection capabilities.

Ram Black Express Pickup Termed 'Menacing,' 'Sinister'

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the Tradesman with a standard Hemi V8 included as part of the value package, as well as a bed liner and tow hitch.

"We quickly found out there was another market that we hadn't thought about," Cappa said.

"... that would be the sport truck folks, people who want something fun to drive - a two-wheel-drive, regular cab, short bed truck with a Hemi in it, standard, and it comes with a standard bed liner and a tow hitch, so what could we do to build on that ... so we came up with the Ram Express.

"We threw on 20-inch wheels, body-colored bumpers and dual exhaust. It still gets the standard Hemi, but it's just a great value package - here you can get a two-wheel-drive truck with 20-inch wheels and a Hemi for 25 grand, so it was a winner right away.

"So we had the work truck for the tradesman, then we had the fun truck and an appearance package with the Express, and a great value, standard value, for 25 grand," Cappa said.

As time went by, the Chrysler marketing people started to realize that a lot of people were clamoring for these trucks in different

cab variations. So the company introduced both models in quad cab and crew cabs. Now consumers can choose from the Tradesman and the Express model that are both available in two-wheel drive and four-wheel drive, and in regular cab, quad cab and crew cab.

Cappa said Chrysler expanded the availability of the popular Express model.

He said the Black Express was born when someone on the design team wanted a completely blacked-out package along with edgy headlights and a menacing look at a great value.



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