

## **Plastics Supplier Combines Operations Under One Roof**

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a car and driving a few miles.

'These buildings were only four miles apart," Macher said. "But they might as well have been 100 miles apart. By having Design, Manufacturing, Sales and Marketing under one roof, it's just so much easier for people to communicate face-to-face.

"So, if someone needs a design change, that person can just walk down the hall and talk to the designer. Our Sales guys have to stay in touch with our customers, but they often didn't know what was coming down the pike, product-wise. Having them in the same building as R&D makes communications between the departments so much easier.'

And communications within departments is more important than ever, Macher said, because Continental Structural Plastics' customers - the automakers based in Detroit - are in the midst of a major overhaul of what materials are being used in the building of modern automobiles.

"The word we keep hearing is 'lightweighting," Macher said. "That's the automakers' mantra."

By building parts out of lighter materials, carmakers can get better mileage, Macher said. That means suppliers such has Continental Structural Plastics have a real opportunity for new business by coming up with newer, lighter materials.

So, having everyone together in one building really does make a difference in the production cycle.

"We started construction on the building in January," Macher said. "We started moving the first people in starting in October. By December, we had everyone in.

"There are about 140 people who now work in our new building, from Advanced Manufacturing to Product Engineering to Sales.

The idea is to create an open environment for communications between the different departments.

"We followed the Hewlett-Packard model of free coffee for everyone so that people might meet in a sort of casual meeting place in the coffee room," Macher said. "That allows us to solve any issues that might come up early in the development process.'

That's important, Macher said, because his company's biggest challenge is developing proprietary technology that will help its customers lightweight their vehicles. They are looking at plastics and carbon fiber to achieve the demands on the modern marketplace.

## **BorgWarner Buys** Wahler Company

BorgWarner has signed an agreement to acquire all shares in Gustav Wahler GmbH u. Co. KG and its general partner (Wahler), a producer of exhaust gas recirculation (EGR) valves, EGR tubes and thermostats.

With locations in Germany, Brazil, the U.S., China and Slovakia, Wahler employs approximately 1,250 people and supplies customers such as Daimler, Volkswagen, BMW, GM and John Deere.

Wahler's annual sales for 2013 are expected to be approximately \$350 million.





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