

Long Fiber Thermoplastics (LFT) – A Global Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The LFT industry has seen segment growth rates of 12 percent to 15 percent annually since 2003. Demand for LFT materials in both Europe and North America has continued its upward climb over the past several years as end users realize the advantages of this technology and more applications switch from SMC, GMT and metal to LFT composites. Both pellet applications (primarily involving complex parts made via injection molding) and direct in-line applications (primarily involving simpler, largely flat parts made via compression or injection molding) have shared in the growth. And, the race is on for “first mover advantage” in the rapidly growing Asian market.

The LFT automotive market has seen incredible growth in recent years, with millions of dollars invested in innovative equipment and materials as the number of plastic pellet suppliers has grown, machinery has been improved, and plastic processors have greater choices on product and processes than ever before. New cost-effective injection and compression molding techniques, particularly using polypropylene, have offered designers and engineers greater degrees of freedom to reduce molded part cost. Overall, the market has been driven by the lowest, cost-in-use of LFT.

Some of the key issues, drivers and trends to be presented include:

- What are the volumes of LFT automotive and non-automotive segments by end use application?
- Which specific applications will be largest by 2011 and why?
- How fast will the LFT material processes (pellets, concentrates, direct in-line) grow?
- How do the strategies of the 20 largest LFT pellet suppliers compare and contrast?
- What is the development rate of emerging LFT applications for non-polypropylene resins?
- Who are the 50 largest global LFT molders and what are their prospects?
- What are the current state and opportunities for the Chinese, Korean or Brazilian markets?

The presentation is global in scope and will discuss the following five regions: Europe, North America, Japan, China and “Rest of The World.” The product focus will be on the following materials: polypropylene; polyamides; other thermoplastics; and glass, aramid, carbon, nickel coated graphite, natural and stainless steel fibers. Glass mat thermoplastics (GMT) are excluded. The application focus will encompass use of pellets, concentrates, and direct in-line compounding for injection, compression and compression/injection molded parts.