

Growing globally



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TPE

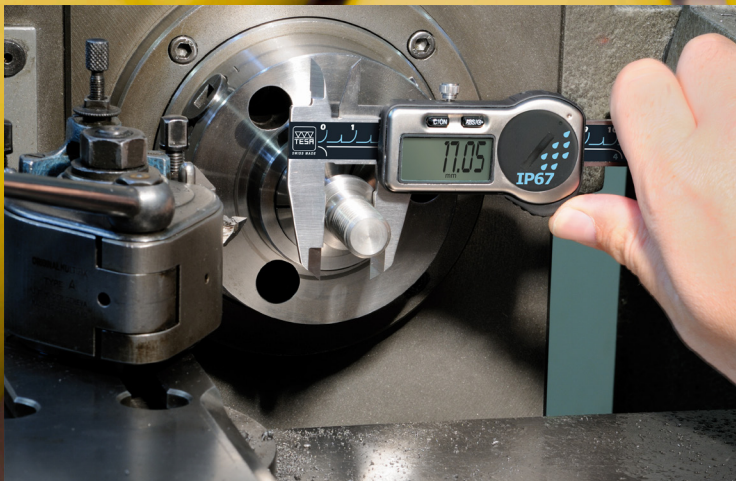
KRAIBURG

CUSTOM-ENGINEERED TPE AND MORE

KRAIBURG TPE is a specialist in thermoplastic elastomer compounds (TPE), providing clients with customized products and solutions that specifically cater to their individual needs. KRAIBURG is a global leader in their field, with international production facilities in Germany, USA and Malaysia as well as a vast number of sales branches worldwide, which includes their recently incorporated operation in Mexico to cater to the Central American market.

Katherine Olano is the Distribution and Marketing Specialist at the company's American production facility. She has witnessed KRAIBURG TPE's steady growth and expansion over the years and is currently preparing to transition into an upgraded facility which broke ground in November of 2014.

"We are actually in the process of moving from our current facility – which is a leased facility in Duluth, Georgia – into our own building in Buford, Georgia," she says. "We're quickly running out of production capacity here, so the new facility is going to allow us to bring in a third commercial production line in addition to our two current commercial production lines and our sample and development line. This will allow us to grow our business from about \$23 to \$25 million right over



\$40 million in the next five years or so."

"We currently have 60 employees and are looking to add another five to seven employees over the next five years," she adds. "We're a growing company, considering that not even five years ago there were only about 29 people here."

According to Katherine, KRAIBURG TPE has achieved this success due in part to their ability to offer clients custom-engineered products as well as top-notch service.

"We are very well-known for our customer

service and our response time in our relationship with our customers," Katherine states.

"Not only are we capable of doing what our competitors can't on the technical side, but we also provide very good customer service and we're always responsive to our customers' needs."

KRAIBURG TPE is also taking action to become more sustainable. They recently achieved ISO 14001 accreditation for environmental management and have implemented a number of environmentally-friendly initiatives, such as their recent partnership with a collapsible water bottle manufacturer

kuraray

Kuraray Co., Ltd. manufactures styrenic block copolymers, under the trademarks of SEPTON® and HYBRAR®. These styrenic thermoplastic elastomers can be used in a wide range of applications including compounds, polymer modification, adhesives, flexible PVC substitutes and vibration damping.



SEPTON™

Hydrogenated styrenic block copolymer: SEPS, SEBS, SEEPS, SEP

- TPE-compound for grips & sealants in automotive/consumer markets, substitute for vulcanized rubber and PVC i.e. cable & soft touch
- Used as impact modifier for PO, PPE etc. and as compatibilizer
- Applied in adhesives for hot melt and PSA, used i.e. for diapers, sanitary napkins, duct tapes etc.



HYBRAR™

Styrenic Block Copolymer with vinyl-polydiene soft block: V-SIS, V-SEPS

- Flexible PVC substitute for medical tubing, bags, flooring etc.
- In TPE-compounds it is applied for thermoplastic rubber with high vibration damping properties
- Used in polymer modification for high vibration damping of PE, PP, PS, ABS etc. in automotive and consumer care applications

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whereby some of the materials they are supplying are made using green energy.

CUTTING EDGE OFFERINGS

KRAIBURG TPE's diverse product line covers a wide array of applications. Their THERMOLAST K series is considered their "workhorse" and encompasses all of their general-purpose grades mainly for the consumer, automotive and industrial industries.

"So, anything from power tools to kitchen utensils to automotive interior and exterior parts," Katherine explains. "We also have ad-

hesion grades that can bond to virtually all other types of hard substrates, such as polycarbonate, acetyl, PC-ABS and polypropylene."

Their THERMOLAST W series is also highly regarded throughout the industry for its ability to maintain a "high coefficient of friction even in wet environments," which is particularly popular in the sports and leisure industry, Katherine points out.

They also offer a THERMOLAST M series which caters to the medical and pharmaceutical industries. There are four main grades

for this series – all of which are manufactured at their German facility in an isolated production line.

"We have a general-purpose translucent grade that is geared towards standalone parts that don't need any adhesion to any other substrates," says Katherine. "We have one designed for adhesions to polycarbonate, ABS and resins. We also have a high elasticity version that has a low coefficient of friction for mechanical components and sealants. And the last series for medical application is the septum, which has a good memory and can

be punctured with a needle to draw fluid over and over again, and it will still go back to its original shape without losing its memory."

"These were developed for all kinds of medical and pharmaceutical applications, such as for syringes, medical devices, nebulizers and tubing."

KRAIBURG TPE's product line also features the THERMOLAST V series for vulcanized grades. Like THERMOLAST M, this series is manufactured exclusively at their German facility. These grades – which







include their HIPEX series – boast a high oil and chemical resistance and are typically used for under-the-hood automotive applications.

Lastly, the company has two new series that were introduced approximately two years ago: COPEC and For-Tec-E.

"COPEC was designed for consumer electronics applications," explains Katherine. "Any electronic device that's going to be frequently touched is the precise application

for this type of grade because it has a high resistance to sebum oil, which is the oil that we secrete from our hands. It also has adhesion to PC-ABS. For-Tec E is virtually the same as the COPEC grade, with the difference that it actually bonds well to nylon and polyamide."

VERY CLOSE-KNIT

At the 2015 MD&M West exhibition, KRAIBURG TPE showcased the medical capabilities of their Thermolast M series to prospective clients. Katherine indicates that



this exhibition generated numerous leads for potential business moving forward. She says the company aimed to achieve similar success at the NPE2015 International Plastics Showcase in Orlando that took place in late March.

"From a materials standpoint, we have a couple of new developments that we will be promoting in the upcoming NTE in Orlando," Katherine says. "We're making a very big push in the automotive market this year. We have developed a high flow TPE geared towards the window and capsulation sector

in the automotive manufacturing industry."

"There's a lot of glass breakage when you try to put a seal around the glass, and these high flow materials that we've developed help with that issue and are above the competition in both pricing and specific gravity standpoint," she continues. "A trend that we've seen in the automotive industry is OEMs are always looking to improve gas mileage, so one way to do that is by reducing the weight of the car. Our materials help make the automobile lighter in weight versus TPVs or PVCs."



It's innovations like these that have propelled the company's growth and expansion in recent years – growth which has only served to strengthen their offerings. Unlike other global companies, KRAIBURG TPE's various international operations are "very close-knit," working together to optimize their capabilities as a whole.

"We work very closely with each other even from different production sites throughout the world," Katherine says. "For example, if we have a question or specific need on our

end, all of our counterparts in Asia and Germany will help and assist us to the best of their abilities. We have also have a global CRM system, so any project being worked on in Germany or Malaysia, we have the capability of using that to obtain any information we need."

"We are truly a global organization," she concludes. "We are one of the few companies that have that capability of working very well globally."

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