

## Driving productivity and business expansion through Light RTM



This is the second in a series of articles that examines how successful composite manufacturers have used RTM or Light RTM manufacturing technology to address the competitive pressures facing their business.

### Light RTM Success Story - Xiraplás LDA, Portugal.

#### Background

Xiraplás of Portugal have specialised in the auto accessories sector since the company was founded in 1993. In 2001, the company started producing components for Mitsubishi Motors Europe - MME. The contract with Mitsubishi covers the production and supply of components to more than 21 countries across Europe. Today Xiraplás produces more than 6000 units per annum of auto-accessory parts for the European market, as well as supplying the Portuguese domestic market and additional accessories for the Latin American market.

#### The Need

The company started operations using traditional hand-lay production methods, however, Xiraplás quickly realised that relying on this approach would not allow them to meet the demands of their customers for either the

quantity or quality of production required. In particular, the quality of finished product demanded by Mitsubishi in order to comply with EU requirements meant that a hand lay operation simple could not deliver. Xiraplás needed an approach that would allow them to deliver the quality of product required, in sufficient volume, whilst enabling them to remain competitive on price.

#### The Solution

After thoroughly researching the market, Xiraplás chose to work with Plastech to deliver a Light RTM production solution. Plastech supplied a number of injection machines as well as providing extensive expertise and training in the Light RTM process and a range of mould ancillaries to support the development and implementation of this solution. Over time numerous



production moulds were developed, all were fitted with Autosprues and fed by a central factory vacuum service to utilise the latest in clean operation technology.



As Ninoska Louro from Xiraplás explained; "We started the transition with two Light RTM closed moulds for two different auto-accessory models and today all the production moulds are using closed mould technology. 100% of the production utilises the Light RTM process due to the great advantages the system can offer when it's well implemented and organised."

#### The Results

Xiraplás were very quickly able to recover their investment in Plastech's equipment, training and mould ancillaries through the greater efficiency and quality delivered by the Light RTM process. Ninoska Louro commented; "In the five years we have been

using Light RTM, we have reduced our workforce from 60 to 40 and in the same timeframe we have doubled our production capacity. Using Light RTM has also pushed us to reorganise the entire company with a focus on continuous improvement. It depends on that."

For the next five years, Xiraplás expects to continue increasing this capacity based on the considerable experience it has gained during the last five years. Ninoska explains;

"All the moulds are produced by us and all the processes are controlled by our people using the significant know how and expertise that they have gained over the last five years".

Ninoska concludes: "We are continuing to work with Plastech as our chosen partners in developing our business using Light RTM. Since the beginning of March this year, Xiraplás has started a new reorganisation in the factory, to increase even more the installed production capacity and to enlarge and diversify the range of products and potential customers we can supply."

### About Plastech

Plastech TT are committed to excellence in the development and world-wide marketing of innovative and workable solutions for using the Resin Transfer Moulding (RTM) and Light RTM (LRTM) processes in composite product manufacturing.

For over 20 years Plastech has provided leading-edge machinery, equipment and tooling technology solutions to manufacturers using fibre reinforced plastics who need a controlled and cost-effective manufacturing process to produce a high quality, highly engineered range of products for their clients.

To find out how Plastech can work with you, please contact Roger Waddington on (01822) 832621 or by email to [rtm@plastech.co.uk](mailto:rtm@plastech.co.uk) or visit our website: [www.plastech.co.uk](http://www.plastech.co.uk)

To find out more about Xiraplás, contact Ninoska Louro on ++351 263274594 or by email to [ninoska.louro@xiraplas.pt](mailto:ninoska.louro@xiraplas.pt) or visit their website [www.xiraplas.pt](http://www.xiraplas.pt)

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