

# know-how

## the magazine

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## Introducing the new know-how hub

Our online content resource goes live

Turn to page 20

### In this issue

Forward pricing for stability of supply	14
Ethydco	18
Colour Tone Masterbatch	36



Still the preferred choice  
for plastics processors



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**Mike Boswell**  
Managing Director

# Welcome to know-how

Welcome to the 7th edition of our know-how magazine. Once again, you will find the following pages packed with information about the products and services we offer to UK plastics processors, as part of our mission to become your preferred choice in supply chain management and added value services.

With Theresa May settled in to her role as PM, Brexit issues still very much in the spotlight and a new US President about to take office in the shape of Donald Trump, it seems that dynamics of global politics has undergone a seismic shift. And as European leaders all jockey for position to secure some allegiance or other with the incoming Trump administration, commentators would have it that the UK's Brexit woes are fully on the radar of the sympathetic president-elect - as the Spectator aptly put it: 'Theresa May now has some Trumps in her Brexit negotiating hand'.

Despite all the trans-Atlantic bridge building in progress, our economy and particularly the value of the GBP against major global currencies continues to react to the uncertain impact of Brexit. The devaluation of the GBP is resulting in significant raw material inflation for UK plastics processors, albeit the added value component of UK manufactured products will be more competitive and the competition from imported products reduced.

As you'll be aware, the EU is highly significant to the UK plastics sector, both as a market for manufactured products, but also as a source of plastic raw materials. It is essential therefore that the UK has an orderly exit from the European Union for the health of our important sector. As such, I am pleased to have been appointed by the BPF

to chair a 'Brexit committee' - a newly formed task force that will "reflect the leading sectors within the industry, and will represent the voice of the UK plastics industry in the upcoming negotiations" (Quote: BPF Director General Philip Law). As a first 'port of call', I presented a paper at the KI Group - Polymer Summit, at this year's K Trade Fair; the talk was entitled: 'Business beyond Brexit: Future relations between the UK and European polymer sectors'. The scope of the talk focussed on key topics, such as access to the single market, access to skills, maintaining and developing legislation compatible with the EU, and support for innovation and overseas business development.

Aside from the Brexit 'buzz', the UK plastics market has continued to face challenges and, in the case of polyolefins, the tight supply conditions, which commenced in February 2015, have largely persisted. With market fundamentals so strongly in favour of the seller, polymer producers have continued to enjoy very strong margins and, particularly those using crude oil derived feedstocks, have experienced a revival in fortunes based upon low oil prices. In contrast to polyolefins and polystyrene, the market for engineering polymers continues to be highly competitive, and plastic processors who have flexibility in terms of grade selection continue to enjoy attractive pricing.

Whilst Plastribution has not been immune from the restrictions affecting PP and PE availability, we have been working hard to mitigate the ramifications of short supply by keeping customers properly informed and, where necessary, offering alternative solutions. Of course, another aspect of availability is supply and we were particularly proud to be appointed as the exclusive distributor for Ethyldco in UK and Ireland, handling the Advancene ranges of HDPE and LLDPE. Postscript: Our logistics provider, Stan Robinson Ltd., recently received our first consignment

of LLDPE from Ethyldco. Please call us to discuss your requirements!

The PDM 2016 plastics exhibition held in June was a great success with a number of excellent enquiries. From a personal perspective, it was a great honour to be nominated on the first day of the event as being one of the 70 most influential people in the UK Plastics Industry. However, this achievement was eclipsed on the second day by Plastribution being named as the best plastics company to work for in the UK by the inaugural PRW Best Places to Work employee engagement survey.

Further recognition came shortly after with the successful submission of three entries into separate categories of the 2016 Plastics Industry Awards. The event itself, which took place on 30th September, resulted in a triumph for Plastribution as product supervisor, Lucy Hickling, came away with the coveted Apprentice or Trainee of the Year Award. In what was a very enjoyable night, it was fantastic to see Lucy being officially recognised for her talents and hard work. You can read more about our entries later in the magazine.

Elsewhere, more evidence of Plastribution's commitment to technical support came in the form of our newly designed plaque tool, providing a unique opportunity to produce samples from blends incorporating fillers such as Granic® or plastomers including Vistamaxx or Queo™.

And last, but by no means least, you should note our further commitment to providing you with relevant and engaging content through the launch of the 'know-how hub' - an online, centralised resource, accessed via [plastribution.co.uk](http://plastribution.co.uk). The hub aims to provide a custom view on the wide range of resources that we place at your fingertips 24/7/365 - read more about this exciting development inside. 🌈

Enjoy the read.  
**Mike Boswell, Managing Director**

## In this issue

Exciting new product from the World's No. 1 in ETFE	04
Welcome to our new starters	06
A perfect match	12
Forward pricing for stability of supply	14
Extrusion blow moulding materials	16
Ethyldco	18
Introducing the know-how hub	20
Plastribution plaque tool	24
Queo™	26
Radici Plastics	28
Welcome to the Plastribution blog	30
Blowing Agents; Just a load of hot air?	34
Colour Tone Masterbatch	36
SUMIKASUPER LCP and SUMIKAEXCEL PES from Sumitomo Chemical	38
Flame retardant additives for film	40
Plastribution provides solutions to support rigid packaging growth	42
Memorial Walk	44
Thoughts on Social Media and the SME	48
PIA entries	52
Product list	58

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# Exciting new product from the World's No. 1 in ETFE



Plastribution is distributing stocks of the revolutionary new ETFE product from AGC Chemicals, a major global manufacturer of ETFE.

AGC is a Japanese company that established itself in 1907 as a glass manufacturer and still remains one of the world's leading suppliers of glass. However, it wasn't until 1975 that they launched the ETFE business. Since then, AGC Chemicals has become a recognised name in the fluoropolymer industry.

AGC Chemicals Europe is the main port of call for fluoropolymers in Europe. Besides being a major producer of ETFE and PTFE under the Fluon® brand, AGC Chemicals also supplies the oil and water repellent branded AsahiGuard®, polyols, fine chemicals and ETFE films, as well as compounded polymers.

Fluon® ETFE has long been the material of choice for many applications owing to its ease of processing, cut through strength, thermal stability, abrasion resistance and chemical resistance.

## Engineered to Adhere

Fluon® LH8000 is the latest development in AGC Chemicals' catalogue of ETFE grades. LH8000 is an engineered ETFE grade that is not only capable of adhering to other materials, but its low melting point affords the capacity to co-extrude with other low melting point polymers, creating a cost efficient layer of chemical resistance.

AGC Chemicals has utilised its own unique adhesion chemistry combined with low melt technology to produce a truly amazing material. Fluon® LH8000 has already attracted a wealth of interest with trials for multi-layer tubes, bottles, cast film and blown film.

## Blown Film Potential

Previously, blown film with ETFE was unheard of due to its low melt strength. Using the revolutionary Fluon® ETFE LH8000, a tie layer and polyethylene (PE), it is now possible to exploit the melt strength of the PE to provide support during the bubble expansion phase of the process enabling the chemical and physical properties of ETFE to be realised in a multi-layered blown film.

## Low Process Gas

Studies have shown that the gas produced during the processing of Fluon® LH8000 is very low and equivalent to that produced during PVdF manufacture. When processing fluoropolymers, the use of corrosion resistant parts such as Hastelloy™ is advised. Research is currently in progress to determine whether non-Hastelloy™ parts could be employed instead, thus reducing the costs associated with ETFE manufacture.

Fluon® LH8000 is suitable for anyone wishing to add a layer of chemical resistance to some of the more familiar polymers available such as nylon and polyethylene.

**If you have any questions about AGC Chemicals Europe or require any further information regarding Fluon® ETFE LH8000, please contact Plastribution on Tel. +44 (0) 1530 560560** 





# Welcome to our new starters

A big welcome to those who joined the company during 2015/16. We continue to invest significantly in the future of Plastribution by employing and developing the people that will help ensure our continued success.

## 01 – Nicole Ray Customer Service Representative

**Start date:** 04 August 2015

**Hobbies/Interests:** Acting, dancing, concerts, reading, travelling.

**Work History/Experience:** Part-time work in cafes/restaurants, including work experience at Plastribution for a week when I was 15.

**Education:** Grade A & B's in my A Levels – English Literature, English Language and Drama. All GCSE's at a B grade including: English, Science, Maths and Business.

**General Comments:** I started Plastribution as an apprentice within the Distribution Sales team and am now coming close to finishing this apprenticeship, of which I have really enjoyed. To date, I have completed the role of a customer service representative, which includes processing sales orders, resolving customers' problems, invoicing, etc. In this role, I have started to learn information about our suppliers and customers, the materials we distribute and how we are able to manage the process as a whole.

Plastribution is a brilliant company to work for - all the staff are so friendly and supportive, which creates such a great atmosphere in the office and Mike is very approachable and friendly which really makes a difference in the company. From what I have experienced so far, Plastribution are loyal to their customers, provide excellent service and try to help whenever possible. This contributes to the success and great reputation that Plastribution has as a business and I am pleased to work for such a great company.

## 02 – Joe Putt

### Technical Specialist

**Start date:** 14 October 2015

**Hobbies/Interests:** Movies, rugby, video games and music.

**Work History/Experience:** I am relatively fresh out of university with this being my first full time job. I did temporary work for a while whilst looking for full time employment - this mainly gave me experience talking on the phone and using Excel. I was made redundant from my paper round when I was 15, which is more amusing than relevant experience.

**Education:** I went to Loughborough University where I studied Automotive Materials. The course was primarily a materials engineering course and I learned a lot about polymers, as well as other material types.

**General Comments:** My role within the technical department is to make sure all the requested regulatory information is provided. I am also the only office-based member of the technical team so I am usually available to help resolve issues as they arise, whether from external customers or the internal teams. This is becoming easier as I become more competent with the product portfolio and gain more experience within the industry. At the very least my knowledge of polymers means that I can ask relevant questions to get to the root of the problem, helping speed up the solution process by working with the other members of the technical team. Working for Plastribution has been enjoyable as the company has an open and relaxed working environment with a good amount of focus on personal development.





**03 – Hannah Adams**  
**Customer Service Representative**

**Start date:** 07 April 2015

**Hobbies/Interests:** Amateur Dramatics! I'm always singing and dancing but try to contain it (although I don't really manage that very well) to rehearsals and performances at The Little Theatre. So far, I have worked back stage on Guys and Dolls and The Wedding Singer and been in Annie, Oh What a Lovely War and Hairspray. I also love films and the trivia that goes along with them.

**Work History/Experience:** This is very varied and includes a lot of administration work but I have also been an optical assistant, a Zumba Instructor in my spare time and worked as an education officer at the National Space Centre. Leicester.

**General Comments:** I have been at Plastribution for a year now and can honestly say it's an excellent company to work for and I'm very lucky to be here. As a business, we pride ourselves on going the extra mile for customers and always

aim to exceed rather than meet expectations. There's still an awful lot for me to learn (I had no idea that 'plastic' was so complex before I got here!) but I'm looking forward to the challenge.



**04 – Richard Pope**  
**Customer Service Representative**

**Start date:** 25 March 2015

**Hobbies/Interests:** Anything outdoors, mountain biking, kayaking, football, rugby. I also enjoy eating out and socialising.

**Work History/Experience:** I started my working life in the hospitality industry, working behind a bar and as a chef in a hotel. After that I moved out to work and travel around Australia and Asia, taking on a large variety of work from picking a colossal amount of fruit to working as a cowboy at a cattle station deep into the Australian bush.

**Education:** Studied at Ashby School for my GCSE's. I then moved onto Loughborough College and completed a BTEC National Diploma in Sport Studies.

**General Comments:** I've now been working at Plastribution for over a year in a customer service role. When I first started I was totally unfamiliar with the plastics industry, but with the ongoing support from colleagues and training, I have rapidly developed my competence within the company. I will be taking on an internal sales role within the next few months and I look forward to the new challenges and responsibility that this role will bring.





**05 – Meghan Ratcliffe**  
**Direct Sales Apprentice**

**Start date:** 02 November 2015

**Hobbies/Interests:** Shopping, baking, 'pink' things.

**Work History/Experience:** Waitressing at Zamanis.

**Education:** GCSEs at Ashby School, A-levels at Loughborough College

**General Comments:** I assist DT3/5, working closely with colleagues. I'm learning quickly and have gained a good understanding of our programs and how we work here. I have enjoyed my first couple of months and look forward to coming to work everyday. I'm looking forward to further advancement and developing more skills.



**06 – Matthew Goodger**  
**Customer Service Representative**

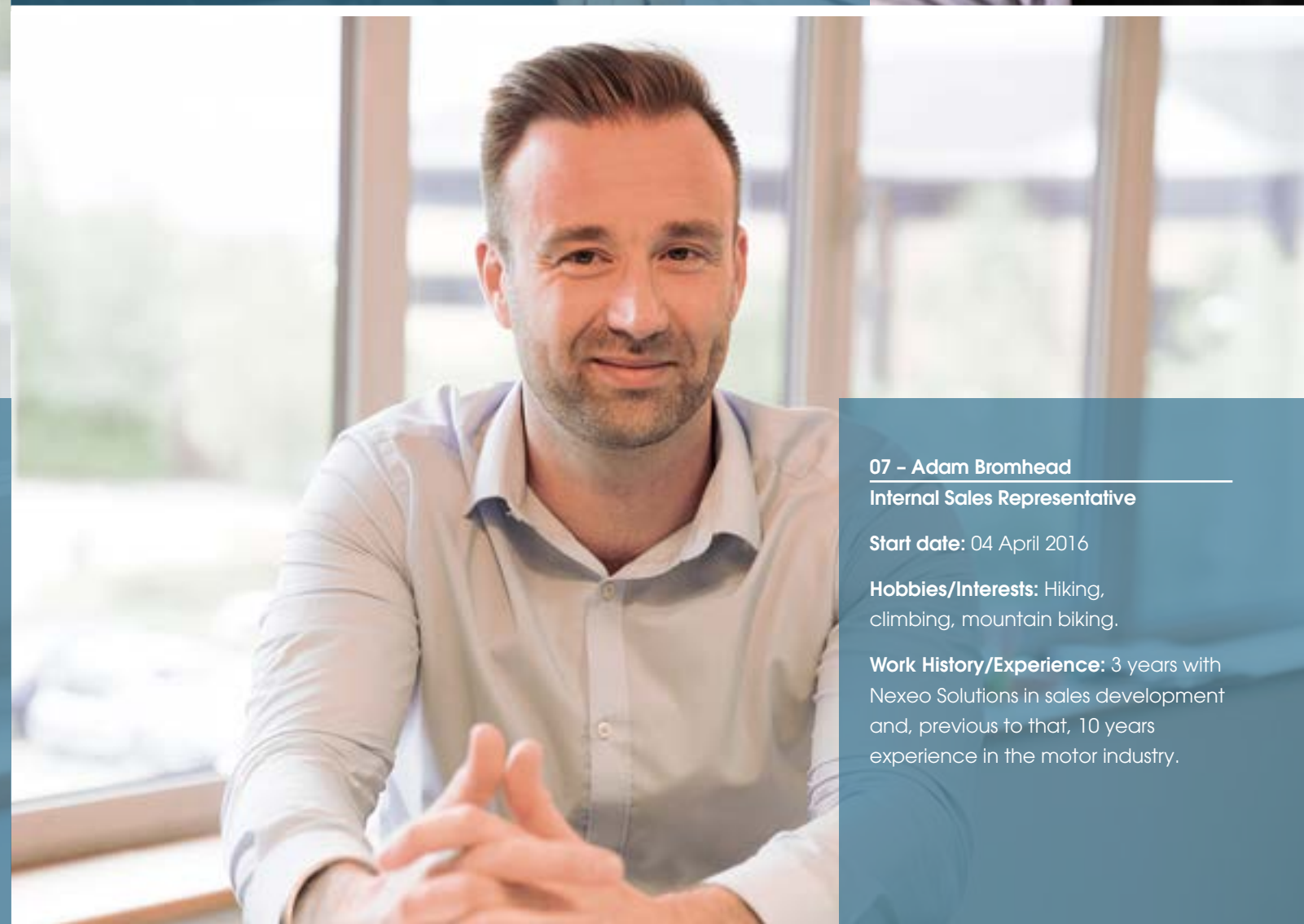
**Start date:** 05 October 2015

**Hobbies/Interests:** Music, technology, good food, taking things apart and attempting to reassemble them!

**Work History/Experience:** Prior to working for Plastribution, I was a recruiter specialising in sourcing customer service/sales people. Before that I had a couple of sales jobs, one

for a large mobile phone company and one for an energy supplier.

**General Comments:** I've been working for Plastribution since October last year and I'm really enjoying my job. Not only do I get to work as part of a great team in a challenging role, but it's also only a 10 minute drive from my house! In my spare time you'll most likely find me touring the local pub scene as part of an awesome Kings of Leon tribute band.



**07 – Adam Bromhead**  
**Internal Sales Representative**

**Start date:** 04 April 2016

**Hobbies/Interests:** Hiking, climbing, mountain biking.

**Work History/Experience:** 3 years with Nexeo Solutions in sales development and, previous to that, 10 years experience in the motor industry.



# A perfect match

Plastribution has a long and prosperous relationship with the Chi Mei Corporation, the world's largest vendor of ABS. Founded in 1960 in Tainan, Taiwan, Chi Mei's many products are widely used in the manufacture of countless customer goods. Products also include SAN, PS, MS, PC, PC/ABS, ASA, Q resin and TPE.

Chi Mei's annual production capacity has reached 3.5 million tons, including an annual capacity of 2.1 million tons of ABS resins.

With more than 50 years of production and R&D experience in this field, Chi Mei offers a stable supply of high quality plastics and synthetic rubber materials.

With this in mind, we would like to focus on Chi Lin Technology, established in 1964 as a subsidiary of Chi Mei. The main business scope at Chi Lin has evolved from plastic colouring and PE product processing, to providing the polymer industry with precision compounds and Color Center colour management.

Chi Lin Technology has over 40 years of experience in the material compounding profession, and has built a library of more than 400,000 colours. All products are of exceptional quality and are repeatedly tested and strictly controlled. In addition, experienced colour-matching technicians and computerised equipment can produce just the right colour for our customers.

Chi Lin has a production capacity of 3000T per month, capable of producing colour compounds to RAL or Pantone reference, or matched to individual requirements from a colour swatch or existing moulding.

Additive packages are also available, including Flame Retardants, UV Stabilisers, Antimicrobial Protection, Antistatic and Laser Marking. UL Yellow Cards and other approvals also remain applicable to Chi Mei polymers compounded at Chi Lin.

Colour-matching takes around 2 weeks and plaques and granules are available for approval. Production volumes start at 3T and Plastribution are happy to hold material for call off. 

# Forward pricing for stability of supply

Plastribution asks: As polymer production increasingly moves away from Western Europe, does buyer behaviour need to change?

The history of polymer production in Europe is rich, with many of the key developments including the discovery of LDPE and development of materials technology for the production of materials such as PP and HDPE/LLDPE taking place within the region. However, over the last two decades, the production of these materials has increasingly moved away from Europe towards the Middle East and Asia where the economics of production are significantly lower. In particular the attraction of converting gas to polymer and by so doing, both adding value and converting a volatile material into a relatively inert solid, is almost irresistible.

Despite the challenges of supply chains & foreign currency, European polymer converters have so far been largely insulated from the consequences of exchange rate volatilities and commercial price risk resulting from longer lead-times and have typically continued to enjoy product priced in the month of delivery on short notice. So far this has left the suppliers of material from outside Europe with the challenge of managing the supply chain and managing the risk in what can be a volatile market.

There is strong evidence that placing the commercial risk on the importer tends to increase volatility as attempts are made both to speculate on the market and also reduce risk by trying to anticipate market trends and react to them. Typically this tends to tighten supply in a market with an upward price trend and increases supply when there is a downward price trend as importers attempt either to enhance profits, or secure purchase contracts against inbound cargoes and unsold inventories.

These very behaviours and the increasing proportion of imports are likely to be a significant cause of the increased market volatility seen in 2015.

As the tide continues to turn, has the time come for polymer converters to consider moving away from the traditional approach of pricing in the month of delivery and to start making forward commitments in terms of their purchases? Plastribution believes that such an approach would:

1. Increase security of supply.
2. Reduce volatility since the speculative behaviour of the sellers would be diminished.
3. Reduce the sellers need to charge a risk premium.
4. Put European converters on a similar platform to those in other parts of the world, where forward buying is often the norm.
5. Move the point of risk closure to the point of consumption, where prices are more typically fixed. 

“Despite the combination of logic and market forces, it is suspected that old habits tend to die-hard,” said Plastribution’s Managing Director, Mike Boswell. “Needless to say we are eager to form effective partnerships with customers to ensure reliability of supply and we are always ready to discuss particular needs to make certain we provide an appropriate solution to meet their requirements.”





# Extrusion blow moulding materials and functional additives supported by Plastribution

Recently we have been working hard with our suppliers and customers, trying to understand how a number of the products within our portfolio can benefit the Extrusion Blow Moulding market.

## Plastomers

These functional polymers combine the benefits of thermoplastics with rubber-like properties. They are commonly used to enable custom impact modification especially at low temperatures in polypropylene and polyethylene. At addition levels of 2-40%, dependent on the requirement, benefits in other key areas can be seen:

- ➊ Reduced stress whitening
- ➋ Increased ESCR in HDPE
- ➌ Soft touch applications
- ➍ Improved impact resistance leading to thinner wall sections
- ➎ Increased clarity

These products can be easily dry blended and their low density means there is often a weight advantage to be seen. This range of food approved materials are compatible with our range of polyolefin base materials for blow moulding.

## Mineral fillers

Granic® products from GCR group offer a wide range of benefits in both processing and product design. These functional masterbatch products are compatible with a wide range of base materials including PP, PE, PS and others. Even at filler levels of up to 80% talc or calcium carbonate, the product is easily dispersed into the base material and because it is a masterbatch there is no dust or any of the other issues found using carrier-free products.

The nature of these materials means processing efficiencies are easy to demonstrate, with much higher thermal conductivity compared to polymer, the energy required to reach melting point is far less, meaning lower barrel temperatures. The same also applies to cooling time, which can be drastically reduced. The reinforcing effect of the filler will mean improvements such as increased top load, higher stiffness and a higher HDT. This effect can best be taken advantage of by reducing the wall thickness of the bottle whilst maintaining all of its physical requirements. A thinner wall section will reduce overall polymer usage and in turn cost.

These ecological masterbatches are often used in products seeking reduced carbon footprint due to the nature of their production. This natural mineral product is sourced locally to the manufacturing plant and produced using 100% renewable energy. When comparing carbon

figures you can easily see the benefit, with 75kg CO2 emissions per MT of calcium carbonate vs 1600kg per MT of HDPE.

## Blow moulding PA grades

Driven predominantly by developments in the automotive sector, there is a market demand for blow moulding PA grades to have enhanced performance properties, especially in regards to heat resistance. Nylon is commonly used in under bonnet applications where temperature, pressure and chemical resistance all need to be considered. Traditional EBM grades from Radici plastics are more than used to dealing with these demands and both filled and unfilled PA6 grades are available for these applications. The increase in under bonnet temperatures of modern cars poses a major challenge for engineering plastics manufacturers but, at the same time, creates a great opportunity for the research and development of special products

that meet the new specification requirements, which are always much more stringent than the previous ones. Working with this perspective, Radici Plastics has developed a range of polyamides that can meet market requirements up to 210°C. These HHR grades come in 15% and 20% GF variants and development continues to push the boundaries with the next aim being grades able to withstand 230°C. The current HHR grades are well suited to EBM and are typically aimed at automotive parts such as turbo manifolds and hot air ducts; this of course is not a restriction and these grades can be selected for any application where hot air heat aging may be a consideration.

All of the grades mentioned here are supported commercially and technically by the team at Plastribution. We are always happy to discuss individual projects and will assist in material selection and processing where possible. 



# Ethydco



Over the last 18 months the polyolefin market has been a torrid one. Oil prices, feedstock shortages and plant shut downs have all played a part in making this market incredibly difficult to be a part of, but just because the market is difficult it doesn't mean that everything stops.

There will soon be a new name in the global polyolefin market and Plastribution are delighted to be instrumental in bringing this new name to the UK and Ireland polymer processing industry.

In 2011, Ethydco was created and once finished will be the largest petrochemical complex in Africa. The name Ethydco comes from the Egyptian Ethylene & Derivatives Company and it will be no surprise to find out it will be based just outside Alexandria, Egypt.

By the end of 2016, Ethydco will be producing close to 400 Ktpa of polyethylene using the Univation production process, as well as ethylene and butadiene derivatives.

The comprehensive LLDPE and HDPE grade slate will cover all of the major production methods. A wide selection of grades for the flexible packaging market as well as pipe and profile extrusion, blow moulding, roto-moulding and monofilament grades.

From the creation of Ethydco in 2011 to full production will take approximately 5 years. Whilst the process for Ethydco to choose its distribution partners has not taken quite that long, the process has been both stringent and detailed. After positive initial discussions between Plastribution and Ethydco in the Autumn of 2014, a detailed and demanding questionnaire was completed in March 2015. The same questionnaire was filled out by a percentage of other prospective partners. However, in April 2015, having got through the first stage, an even more detailed second questionnaire had to be completed. The polyolefin market is extremely competitive but it appeared that the desire to distribute Ethydco product into the UK was equally challenging.

After a further round of scrutiny in July 2015 Plastribution under the banner of its parent company Itochu was awarded the distribution agreement to supply 15,000T/Pa of Ethydco product into the UK and Irish market.

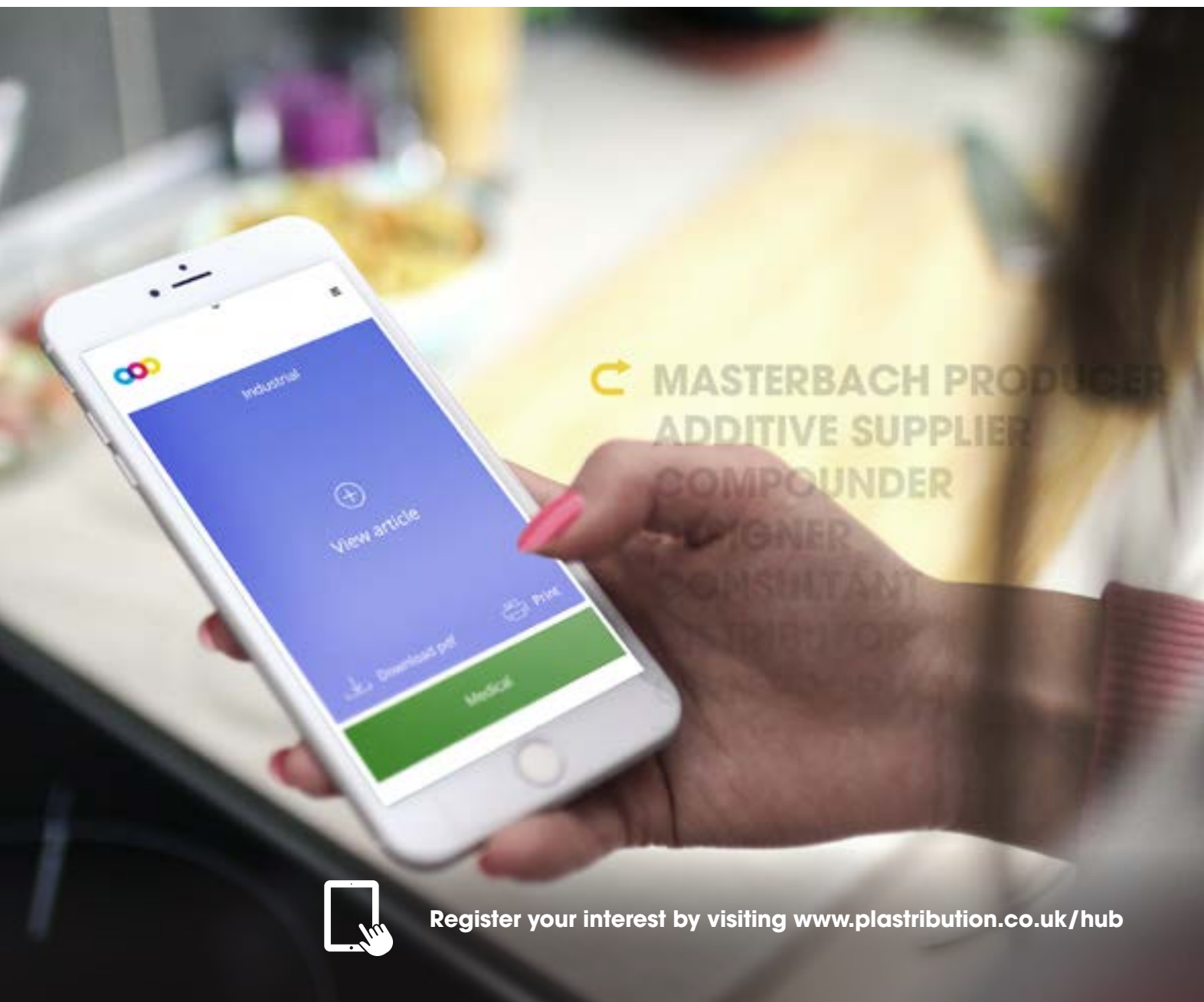
Production of ethylene is now well under way on the Ethydco site. Polyethylene production started in the Autumn, with material hitting UK and Irish shores at the same time as this edition of know-how goes to print. We know this will be an extremely busy time for Ethydco. We also know that Plastribution will need to work hard to meet the needs of Ethydco and its existing and new customer base that will come from such a prestigious new partner in the UK and Ireland.

**As material becomes available, we will of course provide more details on grades and availability. In the meantime, if you have any questions, please contact katherine.white@plastribution.co.uk or your local sales representative.** 





# know-how hub



Register your interest by visiting [www.plastribution.co.uk/hub](http://www.plastribution.co.uk/hub)

In 2011, Plastribution launched the first edition of a new magazine called 'know-how'. It was created to deliver information, insights and opinion to suppliers, customers and the industry as a whole.

At the same time, we used the term 'know-how' as a brand to visually identify other pieces of expert information designed to define our outreach strategy. This content was made available through multiple channels and included advice on pricing, purchasing, market intelligence and innovation.

Plastribution, not unlike other businesses and website owners, was being strategic about 'content' long before the phrase 'having a content strategy' was coined. In effect our know-how concept was well ahead of its time as we were marketing with content long before 'content marketing' became the buzzword it is today.

Content marketing is about engaging customers and prospects with informative or entertaining content they'll want to use or consume for its own sake, rather than pushing or interrupting them with direct sales or promotional messages.

Leading industry brands such as Plastribution have become the new publishers, fully aware that the content that we publish has to be searchable, shareable and actually worth looking at on its own merits.

Over the years, our content strategy has evolved. Alongside our website, together with the advent and development of social media in a b2b context, we have now tailored our content creation model to suit our needs, resources and audience.

## The Future

In making sure that our content is not just adding to the mass of information 'out there', we see it as being vital to focus on quality rather than quantity. We now look to produce fewer pieces of content, but ones that are rich enough to be reused in different channels, can develop into a series rather than a single execution, and/or can generate lots of user responses, which can itself seed more content ideas going forward.



A key part of this process is to have an online system where we can curate our content and share - via user protocols, filters and preferences - to enable us to match our content to our users’ needs and interests. In meeting this requirement, we are delighted to tell you that we have developed and will shortly be launching a new user interface through our web portal know as the ‘know-how hub’.

know-how hub

The fundamentals of the know-how hub are based on a number of key user deliverables. These being:


That we provide a subscription-based, moderated entry point - we felt that it is important to ensure that there was a plausible reason for visitors wanting to enter the know-how hub and access its content. Having a subscription based interface also allows us to measure the ongoing effectiveness of our content.

1. That as part of the user interface we will collate and act on preferences (linked to our CRM), enabling us to ‘push’ relevant content to subscribers. From this we will also be able to understand what our audience looks like and determine what levels of segmentation are required. Having fully opted-in subscriber data also provides additional marketing related benefits outside off the confines of the know-how hub interface.

2. That we provide users with the functionality to search, download and share curated content from an extensive library based on:

- Current and archived know-how magazine content.
- Ad-hoc thought-leadership articles and white papers.
- Current and archived Price know-how content.

- Access to our Process know-how content.
- Access to our Technical know-how content.
- Access to other collateral not included on the above (leaflets, promotional concepts etc).

We very much hope that you will find the know-how hub and the content therein a useful and engaging resource. 



Register your interest by visiting [www.plastribution.co.uk/hub](http://www.plastribution.co.uk/hub)





## Plastribution plaque tool

Being limited by production capacity in order to trial new materials can be a frustrating hurdle for both our customers and our teams. Too often we find the biggest challenge to overcome when either developing a new project with a customer, or troubleshooting, is that we cannot have the appropriate machine time to run material trials.

In order to overcome these challenges, our technical team has made the investment in their very own injection mould tool. Designed to demonstrate material advantages and allow appropriate testing to take place, our plaque tool has already proved to be a significant time saver for many of our customers. This option has allowed them to take a step away from their own production environments and focus simply on the material at hand, giving them a physical demonstration of what the technical data has told them should happen.

Our network of mould shops and training partners allows us to run this tool at a variety of locations, with our ever-changing customer

demands at the heart of this. Need a quick material trial to prove a concept before implementing into production? No problem, we can arrange this. Developing a new product and not sure how different material advantages might help you? Again, not a problem when a day's moulding with technical expertise on hand is available.

The decision-making process behind investing in a tool for us was a simple one - why wouldn't we? Our technical team not only has the design and sourcing experience to select a suitable option, we also have a wealth of processing expertise allowing us to physically demonstrate processing benefits to our customer base. 



# Queo™

There has not been a major new polymer group on the market for nearly 30 years. Different types of polymers are possible but it is questionable if they are commercially viable. However, our friends in the labs have not been idle. Much effort has been put into the development of existing materials, stretching the boundaries of their properties and enabling them to be used in ever more demanding applications.


This development process has been clearly seen in the development of polypropylene and polyethylene. New catalyst technology has enabled grades that exhibit high stiffness, high impact, high clarity to be possible whilst maintaining many of the other desirable properties. Traditionally clear grades had poor low temperature impact, high impact grades always had a high melt viscosity. These principals are now being broken down.

Even if the grade that we want is not available off the shelf, the ability to blend functional polymers into other materials means the possibilities increase further.

Queo™, an ethylene based plastomer produced via a unique metallocene catalyst by Borealis, is one such polymer. Queo™ is essentially a very low density thermoplastic with rubber-like properties which can be blended with polyolefins to create very desirable properties.

In film applications, its low and very sharp melting point greatly improves the quality and speed of sealing. The finished film will be flexible and have increased puncture resistance and toughness. In compounding, its ability to encapsulate high levels of fillers and improve dispersion of high value pigments is very attractive.

Even small additions of grades with densities as low as 0.86 will dramatically improve cold temperature impact resistance and increase the flexibility of films or mouldings. The grades are all food approved so are especially suitable in food storage applications, but have found to be effective in applications as diverse as car bumpers, caps and closures and, due to its ability to accept large quantities of filler, sound deadening for the automotive sector.

**We have lots of data available on the use of Queo™ which we would be happy to share with you. If you are interested in Queo™ from Borealis, please contact the sales office or your local sales representative. **



# Radici Group Performance Plastics

The year 2016 marks the 35th anniversary of the foundation of our nylon supplier, Radici Group Performance Plastics. A milestone in a journey that has seen the Italian company grow to be ranked by Polyglobe as the third largest polyamide producer in Europe.

One of the Group's key strengths is the synergistic vertical integration of its polyamide chain, from basic chemicals to monomer intermediates to final polymers.

From traditional beginnings supplying monomer and base polymers, the Radici Group has moved down the value chain having developed solutions for many technical applications. Products based on different polyamide chemistry now supplement the original PA6 and PA66 products.

## Worldwide Presence

As well as product expansion, the Group's footprint has grown to be truly global with manufacturing in Europe, North & South America and Asia with a sales and support network in 30 countries with 3000 employees.

To further strengthen and expand its presence in both the American and European markets, the Radici Group has recently signed an agreement for the purchase of the Engineering Polymer Solutions business of the American company INVISTA.

Looking ahead to priorities for the future, key areas of development are innovation and sustainability:

## Innovation

The introduction and development of different polyamide chemistries into production at Radici Group Performance Plastics has allowed the company to develop new solutions in three broad areas.

### High Temperature

Radilon®HHR (High Heat Resistant) PA66

Radilon®XTreme High Heat special polyamides

### Metal Replacement

Special Radilon®PA66-GF and high-flow Radilon®PA6-GF

Radistrong® LGF and Radistrong®A

### Enhanced Chemical Resistance

Radilon®DPA6.10 partially bio-based

Radilon®DT PA6.12

The latest addition to the product portfolio is Radilon® XTreme HSW 100NT - an unfilled high temperature polyamide suitable for extrusion applications.

## Main features of Radilon® XTreme HSW 100NT

- Higher resistance to thermal oxidation. Good performance up to 230 for 3000 h.
- Lower water absorption vs. PA66, and PA 46.
- Spin ability at high draw ratios (.3.5)
- Waste reduction vs PA46

## STOP PRESS: Launch of AESTUS T

At this year's K Trade Fair in Dusseldorf, the group also launched Radilon® AESTUS T, a new polyphthalamide (PPA) aimed at the E/E, plumbing, hot beverage dispensing machines and automotive sectors to further enhance the Radici Group Performance Plastics speciality product offering.

Meeting market demand for innovation, maximum customisation, flexibility and performance, Radilon® AESTUS T products deliver the highest temperature and flame resistance, as well as a high chemical resistance, particularly to aggressive fluids.

## Main features of Radilon® AESTUS T

- High melting temperature and high heat distortion under load
- Excellent resistance to prolonged ageing in air, glycol and alcohol/petrol blend
- Good flowability making the moulding of very thin-walled parts possible

## Target markets

### Electrical/Electronic

The performance characteristics of the new PPA range make these material ideal for the manufacturer of lead-free soldering parts and components with high mechanical resistance to high temperatures.

Of particular importance is the flame resistance delivered by Radiflam® AESTUS T materials, which have been designed to be rated in flammability class V0, according to UL94, even in the case of thin walled components.

### Water/plumbing

The Radilon® AESTUS T range is ideal for their manufacture of fittings coming into contact with hot water at temperatures of up to 85 degrees. It has steam resistance up to 120 degrees. Applications include valves, hot water distribution manifolds and water-meter housings. Radilon® AESTUS T can also be used for parts coming into contact with drinking water.

## Hot beverage dispensing machines

In this specific sector, the new Radici Group polyphthalamide (PPA) materials are ideal for the manufacture of parts resistant to hot water (up to 85 degrees) and steam (up to 120 degrees), as well as parts coming into contact with food.

## Automotive

In the automotive industry, Radilon® AESTUS T materials are ideal for applications such as fuel system components (fuel connectors) and high temperature resistant parts in contact with air or cooling fluid (e.g. thermostat housings).

All of these markets have a fast growing demand for customised products requiring flexibility in development and production.

## Sustainability

The Radici Group is committed to developing solutions that meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

The process started in 1998, and in 2013, the Group became the first chemical entity in Europe to obtain OEF and PEF certificates of conformity. Also in 2013, the Radici Group had reduced CO2 emissions by 59% compared to 2010 and targets a 360° sustainable business by 2020.

## Following the signing of a distribution agreement between both parties in

2014, Plastrubion and the Radici Group continue to develop stronger ties to bring all these benefits to the UK market.

€128 MIL

Investments made during the 2011-2014 period to sustain the competitiveness of group companies.

**44.3% Renewable Sources Used**  
Electric Energy Consumption (GJ)



# Welcome to the Plastribution blog!



The last 25 years has witnessed a communication revolution from the early analogue 'mobile' phones to the sleek handheld multi-media devices, which we today rely on, in order to conduct a whole range of activities, including more and more digital communication. This means that today we no longer need to wait until we get to the office, internet café, or open our laptop to access and interact through the internet.

There is no doubt that social media has emerged to be one of the most important innovations of the digital revolution and the fact that already more of the global population has a social media account rather than an email account clearly demonstrates the importance of this means of communication. No doubt much of the success of social media is the ability to richly communicate within a community, sharing experiences, thoughts and ideas, along with the option to decide who and what to follow, and this phenomena is flowing across the increasingly blurred division between home and work.

Here at Plastribution, we have thought long and hard about our social media strategy, and as resourceful pioneers and market leaders the time has come for us to take another important step forward to embrace this part of the digital era.

Along with our regular Twitter feed you will also be able to follow our blog here on [plastribution.co.uk](http://plastribution.co.uk), and our aim will be to provide you with relevant insights into the world of plastics on a timely basis.

After 35 years of using more traditional methods of communication, we look forward to being an important channel in your digital future. Please don't forget we are equally happy to telephone, email or meet face to face.

This is also an opportunity for you to provide us with feedback, and by doing so, help us to provide you with the products and services that shape the future and successes of your business, so 'let's make it work'!



## Does size matter?

Here at Plastribution, we tend not to waste too much time looking over our shoulders at what the competition is doing, although some of their marketing activity can sometimes give cause for thought.

Before moving into the meat of this blog, I must start by saying that I have a very healthy respect for our competitors, many of whom I have become quite familiar with during my 5-year tenure as the Chairman of the BPF's Polymer Distributors & Compounders Group, in addition to the 26 years that I have spent working in this sector with Plastribution.

It was with interest that I recently read the following statement – "As independent distributors, we ensure our customer service levels are exemplary. We steer away from the larger, often impersonal, corporate methods." – clearly this smaller competitor has chosen his words carefully, although by implication, insinuates that larger distributors, which in turn are parts of larger groups, do not care about customer service.

## In the case of Plastribution I would strongly argue to the contrary.

Without using our dedicated, highly empowered customer service teams to prove the point, or spotlighting some carefully selected customer testimonials, I would instead draw attention to the success our business has enjoyed over the last decade and, in particular, the findings of our latest customer satisfaction survey, where 97% of our customers were either totally satisfied or satisfied with the level of customer service they receive.

The statement's veiled criticism of "corporate methods" as something to "steer away from" is interesting; by this are we to assume that the author is against the moral, ethical and legal practices that responsible organisations undertake on behalf of their shareholders in the running of their business – practices such as REACH compliance, ensuring that workers are correctly treated (including the avoidance of child labour) and protection from fraud to mention but a few.

The wording of this statement clearly aims to influence customers' choice of supplier based on discrediting the competition, without proper regard to fact. And if this business achieves its ambition of growth by employing this marketing tactic, what will happen to it as it becomes a larger corporation - will it be able to achieve the outstanding levels of customer service still in evidence at its larger competitors?

**97% of our customers were either totally satisfied or satisfied with the level of customer service they receive.**

## A simple approach to customer service

Over 20 years ago, I was fascinated by a piece of research that revealed that the human mind is only capable of holding about three or four things in our 'working memory' at any one time; working memory being the information we can pay attention to and manipulate. It is with this in mind that our customer teams work on the basis that once they have received your request, it is our responsibility to act on your requirement and, where necessary and appropriate, keep you informed as to progress.

Through this 'consider it done' business philosophy, we have become the trusted partners of UK plastic processors. In order to make this philosophy a reality we select our team members, continually train and develop them, provide excellent resources and empower them to provide you with the services that you say matter.

Great service made simple – connecting UK plastic processors with the world's best polymer producers.



## Ensuring you buy competitively

The message is simple: If our customers are not competitive in their market then we don't have a market for our products. So the starting point of our pricing philosophy is based upon the simple principle that we need to be as competitive as possible.

As the UK's largest distributor we seek to exploit the simple wholesaling principle of aggregating our customers' requirements and so we work in close partnership with a carefully selected supplier base on an official basis. This ensures that we can competitively purchase the required product on a regular basis working with known and trusted polymer producers.

Of course this is only part of the story, because through our dedicated commercial teams we also aim to understand each customer's particular requirements and, where appropriate, put in place a specific supply chain management solution, as well as providing the technical support that helps you to manufacture with maximum efficiency. This approach enables us to deliver value to your business, and we believe that this added-value is reflected by the growth we continue to enjoy in our business – as evidenced by the feedback we have received in our independently conducted customer satisfaction surveys.

In addition to our pricing philosophy, customers can draw comfort from the intense competition in the polymer distribution sector that ensures both economy and efficiency.

Unlike some of our competitors we are not about gimmicks, gizmos and short-term chances, instead we aspire to develop a reliable partnership for a sustainable future.

## #Letsmakeitwork



## Choosing what we outsource

Prior to the 1980's, most companies did as much as they could for themselves and typically this included activities like transport and warehousing, on the basis that including these processes ensured control, retained profit and gave the best service. In fact Plastribution for a period of time until 1991, had its very own warehouse and even a delivery truck.

It was of course very convenient to be able to walk from the office into the warehouse to inspect stocks and collect samples for sales representatives to deliver personally

to customers. However, it became increasingly apparent that the warehouse was never the right size and either too full to cope or too empty to make economic sense. Plus the delivery truck could only justify its existence if the delivery route was carefully selected to ensure optimum efficiency. Without the benefit of a dedicated transport fleet it was increasingly difficult to meet customers' requirements in terms of lead-times.

At this time a change in strategy from Plastribution's parent company led to the use of 3PLs (Third Party Logistics suppliers). From that point forward, the efficiencies of large scale warehousing operations coupled with a transport fleet that was able to meet the requirements of 'Just In Time' manufacturing, rapidly became evident. 25 years on, with an efficient portfolio of 3PLs who are readily able to provide an efficient and cost-effective service with industry leading levels of OTIF (On Time In Full) delivery, we have not looked back.

The evolution of IT has followed a similar story, and over the last 30 years we have seen its role develop from being an accountancy tool to becoming the very backbone of our operation, enabling complex transactions to take place in a smooth and reliable manner providing the information necessary to manage a large SME. Today customers can be assured by Plastribution's strategy of running mission critical Microsoft ERP and CRM systems with the support of one the UK's leading IT companies.

Today our outsourcing strategy is entirely founded on the principles that if an external provider can provide a more efficient service for any part of our operation that is non-core, then Plastribution will carefully select partners who are able to provide services that ultimately benefit you, as our customers.



## The lonely road to success

Both as a business and personally, we tend to spend little time looking at what others in our industry do or even how distributors in other sectors operate. The activity of benchmarking not only pre-supposes that, a) competitors may be doing things better than you, but also, b) what they do will suit our business.

Given that the benchmarking approach facilitates comparison, albeit potentially flawed, since the reference is only relatively better or worse, the approach that we have adopted is to gather intelligence and feedback from the stakeholders in our market and then to evolve our business to meet the requirements in the best way possible. Our approach requires that alternative sources of feedback are obtained, and often it is necessary to 'keep the faith' when short-term performance indicators may be sending information that would appear to contradict that which creates value in terms of price, reliability and service.

At the beginning of 2015, we received reassuring feedback from our customer satisfaction survey and also some 'golden nuggets' of information which indicated that, on a number of important initiatives, we were indeed pursuing the right path. This coupled with receiving very positive feedback on how professional Plastribution is, the recent recruitment of a new team member (who unusually was previously employed by one of our competitors) and the outstanding performance of our main logistics partner, who regularly exceeds a 99.5% OTIF performance, all proves that we moving in the right direction.

Most recently I presented a paper at the forum of the ICIS 5th Global Polyolefins Conference and was particularly pleased when one of the delegates, who was well versed in polymer distribution, specifically sought me out in order to provide very positive feedback about what he had learnt about Plastribution as a result of the presentation.

The timing of this feedback could not have been better given the 'availability' challenges the industry faced in 2015 and the impact of those challenges on our operation. With our faith restored, we will continue to fine tune our service offering to allow us to serve your business even better. Your ongoing feedback is always welcomed.





# Blowing Agents; Just a load of hot air?

Blowing agents are chemical additives that decompose at a specific temperature to release gas, which creates a foamed structure given the correct conditions. This reaction can be exothermic (generates heat) or endothermic (takes in heat).

Blowing agents can be either in solid, liquid or gas form, but for the sake of this article we will be concentrating on solid forms only. These products offer converters several benefits including:

- ⚙ Density reduction (20 – 50% reduction in weight of final part is possible)
- ⚙ Reduction in part cost
- ⚙ Injection moulding of components with thicker sections is possible
- ⚙ Elimination of sink marks and voids
- ⚙ Reduction in warping
- ⚙ Can be used to provide a textured surface if required
- ⚙ Faster cycle times (endothermic agents)
- ⚙ Better sound and heat insulation
- ⚙ Reduction in CO2

As polymer melt cools, it shrinks (particularly so for crystalline materials). Very thick or ribbed sections tend to freeze off more slowly than the rest of the polymer which leads to greater shrinkage and sinking. This can result in sink marks and in some extreme cases, voids. With the addition of a blowing agent, there is positive internal pressure ensuring any shrinkage is negated and voids are filled by the foamed polymer.

As the part is moulded, a polymer skin is formed on the external surface resulting in a good surface finish. If the mould is not fully filled/packed, then the gas can penetrate the surface of the part and cause a streaked/silvered finish, which in most cases is not desirable.

As the part has a core, which consists of a celled structure, the final weight of the part is reduced thus using less material. Endothermic based blowing agents take in heat as they activate, removing heat from the part thus reducing the cycle time.

One of the more interesting aspects of using a foaming agent is weight reduction. The use of foaming agents can increase the ratio of part rigidity. A foam of only half the density will only require a 20 to 25% increase in wall thickness (depending on part design) to maintain rigidity. Prudent use of foaming agents can impart between 20 to 50% reduction in the weight of the final part. There is, therefore, a potential saving in material costs, reduction in the part's carbon footprint and cheaper transportation costs.

Plastribution can offer two grades of blowing agent supplied by Kafrit industries. Your dedicated sales team will be pleased to discuss with you any specific requirements that you may have, and the technical team will be on hand to provide technical support where needed. [cib](#)



# Celebrating 20 years with Colour Tone Masterbatch

Plastribution is proud to celebrate the 20th anniversary of its successful partnership with Colour Tone Masterbatch.

Set up in July 1996, Colour Tone Masterbatch is a highly successful business offering a personalised service in a market that continues to be dominated by multi-nationals.

Managing Director, Tony Gaukroger says: "We supply colourant and additive masterbatches in quantities from 25Kg upwards, for many industries, including injection and blow moulding, film, profile and sheet extrusion. We also manufacture monopigment concentrates for the compounding industry. These can be either universal or polymer specific types (in both engineering or commodity polymers).

"Specifications and tolerances can be agreed on as part of the supply contract. We are only too happy to discuss with customers, or to advise them, on the best way to get maximum efficiency from using our products."

From its inception in 1996 the company has grown to become a multi-million pound supplier.

Sustained investment in both technical and production equipment has ensured that Colour Tone has stayed at the cutting edge of technology, and certification to BS EN ISO 9001:2002 guarantees that customers always have access to "state of the art" products made to exacting standards.

Innovation has played a major role in their success, with Vynacol, their award-winning PVCu masterbatch and Irdent range of Infra-Red Reflective blacks and colours for post-consumer, end of life recycling being acknowledged market leaders in their field.


Colour Tone is a customer-driven business. They never lose sight of the importance of each one of their customers, whether they are a large multi-national or a small family business. Each customer receives the same customer-focused high level of service, coupled with an excellent standard of technical support that is readily available to deal with any queries the customer may have.

The policy of working with their customers and meeting their requirements quickly and efficiently, has resulted in hundreds of regular customers both in the UK and Europe.

In partnership with Plastribution, Colour Tone focuses on delivering a responsive, high quality service for bespoke colours, in universal, commodity and engineering polymers, as well as custom additive blends.

Colour Tone can deliver custom colours to an exact match in less time than it takes to get a standard off-the-shelf universal product because of a high level of production flexibility, which enables quick response as demands change.

Masterbatches are suitable for use in most plastics processes including injection and blow moulding, profile and sheet extrusion as well as film and fibres.

Modern laboratory facilities and plants give the flexibility to meet customer demands for colour matching and sampling, through to manufacture and the tools to develop new products. 

## Lead times:

**Colourmatches 3-4 days**

**Production Order 5 days**



# SUMIKASUPER LCP and SUMIKAEXCEL PES from Sumitomo Chemical

Sumitomo Chemical Europe located in Belgium is the European Headquarter of Sumitomo Chemical Co. Ltd. Sumitomo Chemical supplies high performance plastics LCP, PES and associated technical support.

SUMIKASUPER LCP is a thermotropic liquid crystalline polymer which possesses the highest heat resistance among high performance engineering plastics.

The name LCP refers to its physical properties, liquid crystalline state in a molten phase, and not to its chemical composition as is common for other performance plastics such as PBT etc.

Sumitomo Chemical develops different types of LCP: the standard E series (E5000 – E4000 – E6000 – E6000HF) and functional S series. The S series have specific performance qualities such as ultra-thin-wall fluidity.

SUMIKASUPER LCP exhibits better thin-wall fluidity than any other engineering plastic thanks to its extraordinary low melt-viscosity. Due to its superiority in high heat resistance, high strength, dimensional stability, easy processing, outstanding electrical properties, good chemical resistance, inherent flame retardancy and low water absorption, SUMIKASUPER LCP is well suited for use in automotive, electrical/electronic, telecommunications, aerospace industries.

SUMIKAEXCEL PES is a polyethersulfone which possesses the highest thermal resistance/glass transition temperature among all amorphous polymers. SUMIKAEXCEL PES is a transparent resin with a slightly amber colour having a variety of useful properties, such as heat resistance, creep resistance, chemical resistance, dimensional stability, flame resistance and hot water resistance.

Based on physical form, two types of SUMIKAEXCEL PES are available: granular and powder. Granular grades are suitable for injection moulding applications such as automotive, electrical/electronic, telecommunications and aerospace, but also fit for film and extrusion applications. On the other hand, the powder grades are mainly utilised as impact modifiers for epoxy-based composites, heat resistant coatings, adhesives and membranes applications.

# Flame retardant additives for film

Having supplied the polymer industry for over 40 years, the Kafrit Group is a global leader in the production of high quality flame retardant masterbatches and have partnered with Plastribution for many years.

The Kafrit Group is well established in the building and construction industry where the main applications for film are:

- 🔧 Insulation films.
- 🔧 Banner films.
- 🔧 Bubble films with and without laminated aluminium foil.
- 🔧 Roofing and ceiling insulation.
- 🔧 Packaging.
- 🔧 Covering boats and houses during extended periods of time.

For these and other applications, Kafrit is able to offer a variety of flame retardants compatible with most thermoplastics.

Flame retardants are added to polyolefins and other polymers to increase resistance to ignition, reduce flame spread, suppress smoke formation and prevent a polymer from dripping. The primary goal is to delay the ignition and burning of materials, allowing more time for people to escape the affected area. A secondary consideration is to limit property damage. They act via a physical or chemical mechanism.

Halogenated flame retardants are the most common type used for plastics due to their favourable cost: performance ratio with bromine-based considered the best. For a particular level of fire resistance, halogenated flame retardants can be used at a lower loading than other types. Due to this low loading the base polymer will retain more of its mechanical properties. Another advantage is that they are easy to process which is especially important in polyolefin films.

Chlorine-based flame retardants are also an important group. Their main advantages are lower cost than bromine-based compounds and better light stability. However the trade-off is processing temperature which is limited to 200°C.

**Kafrit offers a wide range of halogenated flame retardants for film which include:**

**FR 0K360 LD and FR 07062 LD**, bromine-based.

**FR 07049 LD and FR 00S27 LL** are based on a unique Bromine compound which enables a higher processing temp. of >300°C for applications such as cast and bubble films.

**FR 0J720 LL and FR 0B041 LD**, chlorine-based.

**Halogen-free flame retardants**

Constab, part of the Kafrit group, has developed a new range of halogen-free grades which comply with building industry FR standards:

**ZHFR 07158 LD**

Zero-halogen FR masterbatch with temperature stability up to 200°C.

For transparent applications.

Meets standards FMVSS 302, UL 94, DIN 4102 B1 and B2, EN 13501-1, Euroclass E

Typical let-down ratio: 4.0 – 20.0%

**ZHFR 07175 LD**

Zero-halogen FR masterbatch with temperature stability up to 235°C.

For transparent outdoor applications.

Meets standards FMVSS 302, UL 94, DIN 4102 B1 and B2, EN 13501-1 Euroclass E

Typical let-down ratio: 4.0 – 20.0%

**ZHFR 07169 LD**

Zero-Halogen FR masterbatch

Meets standards NF P 92-503 and NF P 92-504 for classification M2 to M4

Typical let-down ratio: 8.0 – 14.0%

**ZHFR 07179 UNI**

Zero-Halogen FR masterbatch

Meets standards NF P 92-503 including NF P 92-504, NF P 92-505 for classification M1 to M4

Typical let-down ratio: 10.0 – 18.0%

These new halogen-free flame retardant masterbatches have the following attributes:

- 🔧 Easy processing in thin wall applications such as films, as well as in sheets and pipes.
- 🔧 Good optical properties, therefore suitable for both translucent and transparent articles.
- 🔧 Excellent UV stability.
- 🔧 High efficiency at low dosage levels.
- 🔧 Suitable as replacements of existing systems as well as for new market opportunities.
- 🔧 Dedicated grades for various FR standards.

**Applications include:**

- 🔧 Covering films.
- 🔧 Hoods.
- 🔧 Greenhouse films.
- 🔧 Bubble films.
- 🔧 And many more. 🌈



# Plastribution provides solutions to support rigid packaging growth

A key driver behind the packaging industry's recent growth surge has been the continued success of rigid plastic manufacturers. With various reports forecasting that sales of rigid packaging are likely to top \$174.3 billion by 2018\*, an annual growth rate of 5.2% for the next five years, Plastribution says that the demand for standard material grades is likely to flourish, as is the need for specific properties for certain applications.

One of the key reasons for this growth is the ongoing substitution of glass and metal for plastic, the latter being a lighter and more cost-effective packaging solution.

For speciality grades, Plastribution's long standing relationship with both Carmel Olefins and PP producer Ducor Petrochemicals, both part of the Bazan Group, has seen a number of transparent, versatile copolymers being introduced over the years, specifically aimed at rigid packaging processors.

## Capilene®

Capilene® is Carmel Olefins' registered trade name for a highly versatile range of PP homopolymers, impact and random copolymers, manufactured since 1993. Within the Capilene® range, Carmel Olefins released their 'C' grades about 2

year ago. These grades successfully combine the optical clarity of PPRCP together with the impact properties of PPCP at standard room and chill room temperatures. The technology also ensures that the materials have a high gloss finish and do not suffer stress whitening on impact or through regular flexing.

The newest member of the family is Capilene® CL 50 E – a speciality soft polypropylene that combines the typical advantages of polypropylene random and copolymers and contains a stabilisation package of additives. It features low flexural modulus, easy processability, excellent mechanical and optical properties, together with excellent stress whitening resistance.

Capilene® CL 50 E can be compounded, injection moulded, thermoformed and used to produce cast films.

## DuPure®

DuPure is a range of phthalate-free polypropylenes, of which DuClear is part. There is general agreement that polypropylene produced using standard phthalate-based catalysts would not be subject to restriction or ban due to the REACH legislation directly. From the context of the REACH requirements, there is no need for the use of alternative catalysts. However, there is a more general concern that end-use markets will demand phthalate-free polypropylene, due to perceived safety concerns. Plastribution believes that the key issue regarding phthalate-based catalysts for polypropylene is not a legal one, but an issue of public perception.

For example, G72F has a very high modulus, is transparent and has been designed for the thermoforming industry. There are also two high melt flow grades designed for thin wall packaging applications: W76 has a MFR of 75 and Y76 has a MFR of 100 and could offer real processing and cycle time benefits to compounders and moulders.

To complete the range there is a clear homopolymer with excellent impact properties: U73A is ideal for thin wall packaging applications where transparency is key.

The copolymer range is equally extensive and Ducor has worked hard to improve the balance between impact and stiffness across the range. As you'd expect there are high impact grades for crate, container and closure applications, but also high flow grades for house-ware and packaging applications: SU77AV has not even made it into Ducor's latest brochure - it has a MFI of 48, but critically retains very high modulus and impact properties making it eminently suitable for pales, buckets and other similar applications.

The range of clear random copolymers also includes a couple of strong performers: QY80AV with an MFR of 100, retains a very high level of transparency and would suit high speed moulding application, whilst the high modulus of QG80A make it perfect for the exacting requirements of ready meal and drinking cups applications.

As the demands for phthalate-free polypropylene grows, the DuPure range will become increasingly important, being able to meet many exacting and high requirements for specialist applications. On this basis it should not be ignored, whatever your requirements.

**For more information contact  
Plastribution on 01530 560 560.**

(\*source: Smithers Pira The Future of Global Rigid Plastic Packaging to 2018)

## Dave Machin Memorial Walk 22nd May 2016

On 30th May 2015, as a result of complications following an earlier operation, Plastribution tragically lost a close friend and colleague - David John Machin. He was only 56 years of age.

Having worked with the company since 2002, Dave was employed as the Direct Sales Manager at Plastribution and was a trusted, well liked and hugely respected colleague.

He thoroughly enjoyed his sport and loved nothing more than playing football with his sons or going for a walk around the countryside where he lived in Staffordshire, followed by a pint or two in his local - the Travellers Rest in Stanley village. On the anniversary of his passing, it seemed fitting to organise a circular 5-mile walk in his memory, starting at the Travellers Rest, passing by the Hollybush Inn at Denford and then walking along the Caldon canal back to Stanley for a well-earned pint and a sandwich. The aim was to make the day as informal as possible with as many family, friends (including the four-legged variety) and colleagues attending and completing the walk.

With the blessing of Dave's wife Diane and two sons, Tom and Ben, it was agreed that Sunday 22nd May would be an ideal date for the event. It was also agreed that we would take the opportunity to use the walk to raise money for the critical care unit at Stoke Hospital, in recognition of the staff that cared for Dave in the eight weeks he was there. A total of £600 had already been raised at Christmas and, as the day of the walk approached, donations hit the £1,000 mark - a fabulous achievement.







The event itself was really lovely, filled with laughter and much fun - Dave would have thoroughly enjoyed the day. Over 60 people completed the walk, with at least 10 dogs causing havoc along the way! The weather stayed dry although heavy rain the day before made the first leg of the walk a little muddy which all added to the fun, especially for those with less than suitable footwear. Everyone was there to remember Dave and it was a great opportunity for colleagues to walk and talk to his family and friends, reminiscing along the way.

There were lots of highlights along the route, including an impromptu fly past by the Red Arrows whilst walking along the canal tow path, which seemed quite fitting.

**All in all a total of £2,274 was raised for the critical care unit, plus a further £205 in gift aid - a fantastic result. A massive thank you to everyone who participated and for your generous contributions.**





## Thoughts on Social Media and the SME

We are frequently asked how we find using social media and, in particular, how our business is exploiting this marketing channel. Having managed a Twitter account for over 18 months and being active in LinkedIn engagement, here are our thoughts.

### What do we do?

Our business ([www.plastribution.co.uk](http://www.plastribution.co.uk)) is a Supply Chain Management and Added Value Services business that happens to be primarily involved in the supply of plastic raw materials to UK processors. It is perhaps surprising to most that this niche B2B business area is highly competitive and, therefore, much of our efforts go into persuading customers that we should be their preferred supplier. Furthermore as the largest player in the market we also strongly believe that we are in a great position to show thought leadership in the sector - given that competitors are all too eager to copy what we do, then this is most definitely a journey without destination.





First of all we have appointed a first class marketing agency to work in partnership with us so that we do our utmost to continuously deliver high quality content. Whilst at the heart of what we do lies our website, we also understand that in an era where there is evermore competition for everybody's attention we also have to be proactive in terms of taking the message to our target audience. Also, as part of a customer satisfaction survey, we took the opportunity to get feedback on both our current marketing activity and importantly on the communication preferences of our audience.

#### How have we done it?

Obviously the creation of relevant content, which appeals to the target audience, is a necessity, but trying to expand the breadth of the audience requires investment. In addition to developing a database within our CRM system we have also invested in the targeting of industry media data via custom e-shots, thereby engaging with a broader audience. We have also ensured that the creation of content is shared and that, where particular expertise exists in terms of technical or commercial knowledge, that these individuals are encouraged to provide personalised insights. These diffusion channels are proving ever more popular.

#### Is it working?

Most definitely. Along with positive feedback, we have seen increased business activity and new business opportunities from our efforts.

#### What is the cost?

Whilst the cost of distribution is nil in the case of our own database, there is a real need to produce quality content and there is an obvious cost to 'renting databases' of target audiences. However these costs are competitive compared to traditional print advertising or website banners and clearly there is the opportunity to deliver much more content.

#### What is the future?

With the ever increasing competition for time, the need to deliver relevant content becomes ever more important. Furthermore, compared to traditional print media, the internet provides the opportunity to provide media-rich and interactive content. Here at Plastrubution we are busy developing our marketing strategy to make use of these interesting opportunities. 





# Plastics Industry Awards

30th September 2016



Launched in 2001, and held annually in London, the Plastic Industry Awards is dedicated to rewarding innovation and exceptional performance. The event acknowledges the best companies and the best people in the market.

## We won!

On the back of what can only be called a 'PIA drought' for too many years, Plastribution was successful this year with our entry in the 'Apprentice or Trainee of the Year' category. We were delighted to see our very own Lucy Hickling triumphantly holding the coveted trophy aloft on the PIA stage, as well as being presented with a winner's cheque for £1,000 - so well deserved!

Amongst a flurry of near viral social media activity during the evening celebrations, Lucy tweeted: "Thank you so much to my family, friends and @plastribution for all their support and making this possible. What a night! @plasticsawards."

## As a compendium, our three shortlisted entries are included below:

### Entry: Lucy Hickling

As the first member of our successful apprentice programme, Lucy Hickling joined us in 2010. Since then she has made rapid progression within the company, playing a pivotal role in critical HR and IT projects and most recently being a key member of our product management team. In 2015 she achieved a first class honours degree in business studies from Derby University.

Lucy was successful as a PIA finalist in 2011, but due to her continued progress and obvious potential we felt compelled to submit an entry once again.

It is widely recognised across the industry that the recruitment of staff with the correct skills and abilities is consistently challenging. On this basis, in 2010, Plastribution set out to develop and train individuals to fulfil key roles using the apprenticeship programme as a framework. Our overall objective was to equip Lucy and successive Plastribution apprentices with the technical and commercial skills, not just to succeed in our business, but any business.

As with all apprentices Lucy benefited from a detailed induction to ensure she was familiar with the structure of the organisation and had a good grasp of business processes. Using this early experience, she went on to help develop a much more structured and suitable staff development programme, which we are currently using for all new employees. She has continued her own development with a combination of academic and 'on the job training', as well as attending polymer training courses and taking part in other bespoke learning opportunities.

Having joined Plastribution in 2010, Lucy made the decision not to attend university after completing her A Levels. The decision to join the world of work did not indicate any lack of academic ambition, as having completed her apprenticeship based at Loughborough College in 2012 with distinction, she committed to a further 3 years of study, which was rewarded with a first class honours degree in business studies from Derby University. Whilst supported by Plastribution, her studies at Derby University were largely undertaken in Lucy's own time; the level of commitment shown to her studies whilst maintaining an increasing important role within the team highlighted an impressive level of dedication.

The company saw the benefit of her studies immediately. Having expressed a keen interest in HR and staff development, she became a practitioner of our psychometric testing tool and was heavily involved in an overhaul of our development, appraisal and competency matrix programme. Due to her good understanding of Plastribution's systems and processes as a whole, she was also a valued member of a small project team who scoped and designed a bespoke Customer Relationship Management package, which was built in 2014.

Within her current role as 'product group supervisor' she has built relationships with key European suppliers including Total and Ducor. One of her primary functions is ensuring critical market information is passed between suppliers and our sales teams; her introduction of a monthly newsletter

provides a simple but effective vehicle to communicate complicated messages to relevant parties.

Lucy's involvement in the production of a very detailed tender was vital in the winning of a recent contract to become the distributor for Ethydc in the UK and Ireland. As an Egyptian supplier, Ethydc will be producing 400KT of polyethylene by the end of 2016. The award of this distribution agreement will have a major impact on the ongoing growth plans of Plastribution and Lucy will be instrumental in continuing to build this vital relationship as material begins to arrive in the UK during the late summer months. The fact that the preparation of this critical tender was entrusted to Lucy speaks volumes about how much Plastribution values her skills and knowledge. 🌈





# Supplier Partnership - Materials



## Entry: Formabowl

### Parties involved:

**Culina IPS:** Provides co-packing and co-manufacturing solutions to some of the UK's best-known food brands. As a business entity, IPS was acquired by the Culina Group in May 2014 and rebranded as Culina IPS.

**Plastribution:** The UK's leading distributor of thermoplastic raw materials for injection moulding, extrusion and blow moulding industries.

**Patterson & Rothwell (P&R):** Based in Oldham offering state of the art injection moulding and injection mould toolmaking facilities.

**257:** Manchester based multi-disciplinary agency including industrial designers, engineers, strategists and brand experts. Offers an integrated approach covering product, brand and communication.

## Summary

Formabowl is a range of single use, collapsible packaging containers with heat sealed film lids, which are designed to be transported, stored and sold in a collapsed form and 'popped up' by the consumer at point of use. The concept was developed by Paul Cheney at Culina IPS (formerly Chairman IPS Group).

In addition to consumer convenience, the clear benefit of Formabowl is in the supply chain. Twice as many collapsible units/pallets of the Formabowl container can be transported compared to non collapsible units of a similar product. Savings on logistics costs of c.50% are considered realistic.

### Initial collaboration

Plastribution was initially contacted by Culina IPS with a request to help take a failed prototype product through to market launch. The initial stages of development had led Culina IPS down a fragmented route of product development and, due to using traditional routes, certain key stages of design for manufacture had been overlooked.

A prototype tool had been cut and moulded from an off-the-shelf material; this had led to the project being halted as the prototype parts were not meeting expectations.

The request for Plastribution's support was based primarily on material selection, however it quickly became clear that there was a need to facilitate a full product development and design process, along with identifying the route to manufacture.

The development of the relationship between all parties began in early 2015 and has since grown into a collaborative group focused on product success.

### The result

As a result of Plastribution's active involvement in providing key material innovation, in addition to providing a unique approach to facilitating key relationships, there is now a functioning 'go to market' product which is able to be sold to key food brands in the UK for multiple purposes.

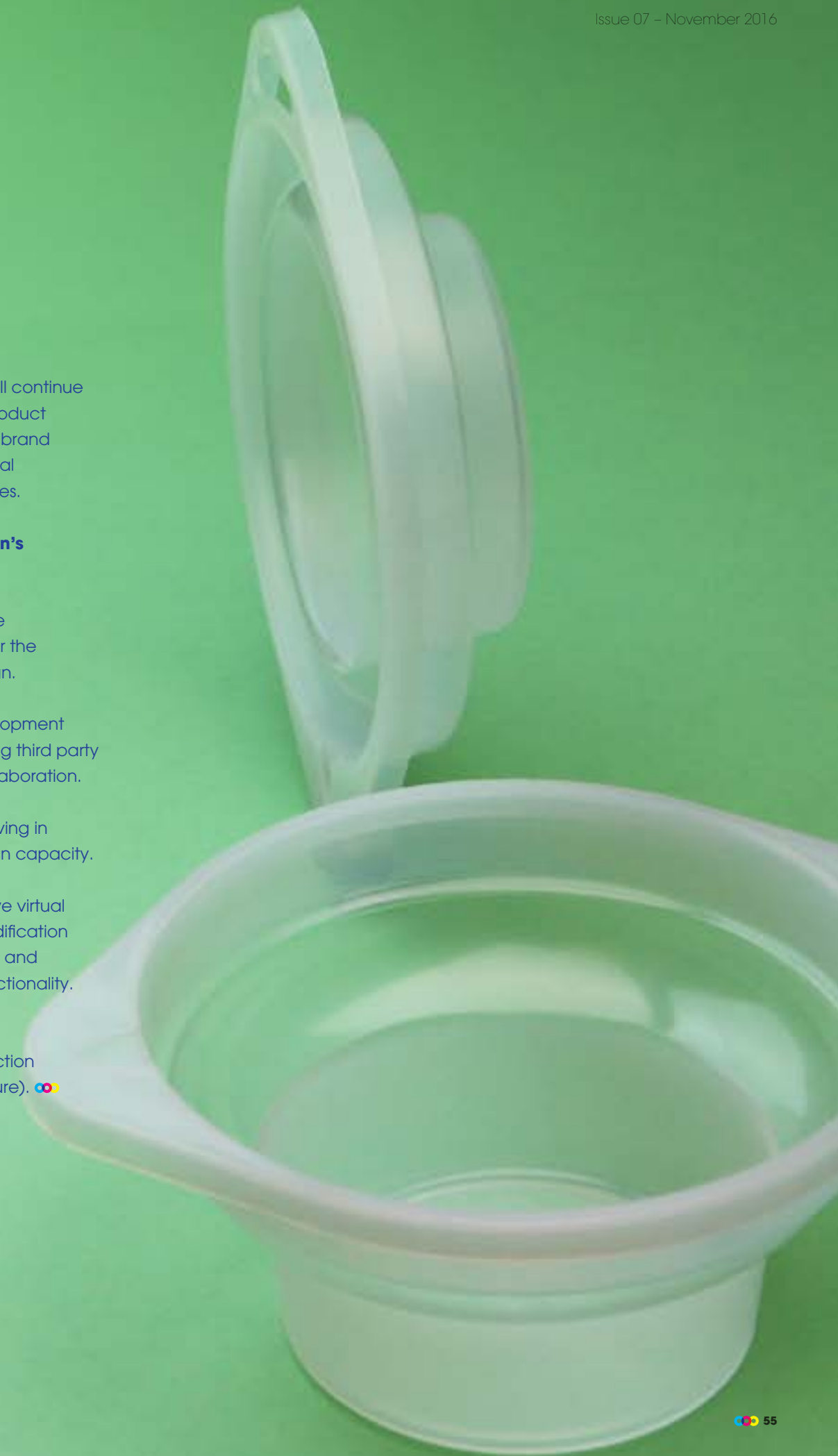
### Product realisation and route to market

The Formabowl is due to be launched to market via Culina IPS and already there is considerable interest from brands for significant quantities of the innovation. It is intended that the development process will then focus on brand/application specific requirements with variations in shape or form to suit.

Development partners will continue to play key roles in the product advancement, while the brand owner considers additional sales channel opportunities.

### Summary of Plastribution's involvement

- 🔄 Creation of a bespoke blend ideally suited for the application and design.
- 🔄 Engineering the development process and facilitating third party participation and collaboration.
- 🔄 Providing problem solving in a technical and design capacity.
- 🔄 Providing an innovative virtual stance on design modification to achieve timescales and resolve issues with functionality.
- 🔄 Adding overall value beyond material selection (design for manufacture). 



# Best Business Initiative of the Year



## Entry: know-how

As the UK's leading plastics raw materials distributor, Plastribution is the preferred choice for plastics processors. With an extensive portfolio of over 5000 grades sourced from over 35 global polymer suppliers, we have evolved our distribution model to be supportive, sustainable and secure.

As a key part of our business strategy and to fully cement our status as informed thought leaders and a go-to resource in our field, we looked to introduce a suitable communications platform through which to provide insights, expertise, advice on pricing and purchasing, market intelligence and training support to our suppliers, customers and the industry as a whole. As a direct result of this, an enterprise called 'know-how' was launched to focus on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content.

## As a successful business initiative, the current know-how suite consists of:

- 🕒 Price know-how - a monthly publication looking at key factors that affect UK polymer markets.
- 🕒 know-how magazine - an annual printed publication providing a collection of articles, news and views to a widespread readership.
- 🕒 Training know-how - making a contribution to training a world-class UK plastics workforce.
- 🕒 Industry know-how - a series of articles that provide essential background to the industry, terminology and practices.

Over the years, there is no doubt that the initial impact and subsequent momentum of the know-how initiative has had far reaching benefits for Plastribution. Certainly in terms of helping our customers have further success, the feedback we receive continues to be highly positive.

Where we have been able to measure the effectiveness of our outreach and engagement, we have done so. This has been possible through most of the know-how suite, although a reliable engagement measure of our know-how magazine is at best sporadic, due to it being a printed production with a widespread distribution and limited feedback opportunities beyond positive word of mouth endorsements.

Across the range, however, we can report a month-on-month steady increase in subscribers to Price know-how, in addition to the provision of supplementary market insights to the industry media. We continue to maintain good attendance levels at all of our training courses and consistently see high levels of traffic on our Industry know-how web pages.

Another benefit of the know-how initiative as part of our marketing strategy, is the ability to integrate the content with our other marketing efforts. The use of blog, LinkedIn and Twitter have provided useful channels through which to promote valuable content and we have seen a steady increase in connections and followers as a result. 🌈

## know-how

“As a concept that was put together some 5 years ago, Plastribution's know-how was ahead of its time. With many other businesses remaining fixed to their outbound marketing strategies to promote their offering, know-how was launched to share content and deliver added-value; be that expertise, knowledge, insights or training provision. From our perspective, know-how provides a rich source of information and guidance that is beneficial to users of the PlastikCity site. We fully endorse know-how as a business initiative.”

Carl Fletcher, Managing Director, PlastikCity Ltd





# Product list

The Plastribution team is always available to provide advice on all aspects of grade selection including design, processing and properties. So please do not hesitate in contacting us to discuss your specific requirements.

Please remember that, despite our best efforts to do so, it is almost impossible to cover every request for information on the website or through the new portfolios, particularly as new developments are happening all the time.

If you are unable to find what you require, just get in touch on the phone, email or through the website and, if we really can't help, we will do our utmost to point you in the right direction.









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Supplier	Material	Brand Name
	TPE/SEBS	Megol®
	TPE/TPO	Apigo®
	TPE/TPV	Tivilon®
	TPE/SBS	Raplan®
	TPE/PVC	Apiflex®
	TPE/PVC/NBR	Apilon 33®
	TPE/PVC/TPU	Apilon 64®
	TPE/EVA	Apizero®
	TPE/EVA	Apifive®
	TPU	Apilon 52®
	COAGULATION TPU	Apilon 52 c®
	CAST ELASTOMERS PU	Apithane®
	MASTERBATCHES	Apicolor®
	TPU BIOPLASTICS	Apilon 52 Bio®
	BIOPLASTICS	Apinat Bio®
	POM (Acetal Copolymer)	Iupital
	Polycarbonate	Iupilon
	PC/ABS	Xantar C
	PC/PET	Xantar E
	Medical Acrylic	Cyro XT
	Medical Acrylic	Cyro
	PMMA	Plexiglas
	PEEK	Vestakeep
	PPS	
	SPS	Xarec
	Polycarbonate	Tarfion
	Polycarbonate	Wonderlife
	PC/ABS	Wonderloy
	PP Compounds	Exxtral
	TPV	Santoprene
	PA12	Plustek
	PA6	Plustek
	PA6.6	Plustek
	Long Glass Fibre Compounds	Polytron
	PP Compounds	Ramofin
	PBT	Ramster
	Conductive Polymers	Pre-Elec
	Static Dissipative Compounds	Pre-Elec ESD
	High frequency Solutions	Pre-Perm
	TPEE/TPE/TPV	Heraflex
	PA6.6 Industrial	Herafid A
	PA6 Industrial	Herafid B
	PA6 Industrial	Herafid S
	PA6.6 FR	Radiflam A
	PBT	Radiflam B
	PA6 Prime FR	Radiflam S
	PA6.6 Prime	Radilon A
	PA6 Prime	Radilon B
	PA6.10	Radilon D
	PA6	Radilon S
	PA6 Prime	Radilon S
	PBT	Radifer
	PC, PA, PBT	Romiloy
	PPE Blends	Luranyl
	PP Compounds	Thermofil
	LCP	Sumikasuper
	PES	Sumikaexcel
	PPS	Susteel


## Engineering polymers

Supplier	Material	Brand Name
	Purging Agent	Barrel Blitz Universal
	Biohybrid	Cardia Biohybrid
	Masterbatch - Colours	Colourtone Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - Blowing Agents	Colourtone Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - Nylon	Colourtone Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - PBT	Colourtone Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - Polycarbonate	Colourtone Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - POM	Colourtone Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - PVC	Colourtone Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - Universal	Colourtone Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - UV Stabilisers	Colourtone Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - Anti-static	Colourtone Masterbatch
	Functional Polymers	Exxelor
	rPET	brighterPET
	rPET	PurePET
	Mineral Filled Compounds	Granic
	Masterbatch - Blowing Agents	Kafrit/Constab Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - Flame Retardant	Kafrit/Constab Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - Process Aids	Kafrit/Constab Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - Slip Agent	Kafrit/Constab Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - UV Stabilisers	Kafrit/Constab Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - Anti-block	Kafrit/Constab Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - Colour Universal	Kafrit/Constab Masterbatch
	Masterbatch - Slip/Anti-block	Kafrit/Constab Masterbatch
	Repro LDPE - Natural/Grey	LDPE GREY
	Repro LDPE - White	LDPE WHITE
	Repro LDPE - Black	LDPE BLACK
	Repro LDPE - Green	LDPE COLOUR
	Repro HDPE	HDPE BLACK
	Agglomerated PE	PE ECOIN

## Specialities

Supplier	Material	Brand Name
	ABS	Polylac
	SAN	Kibisan
	ASA	Kibilac
	PC	Wonderlite
	PC/ABS	Wonderloy
	SMMA	Kibiton
	SBC	Kibiton
	Q-Resin	Kibiton
	SMMA	Styrlilic
	GPPS	Total GPPS
	HIPS	Total HIPS
	HIPS Alloys	Total HIPS Alloys
	HIPS FR	Total HIPS FR
	Longlass Fibre ABS	Ramshine

## Styrenics

Supplier	Material	Brand Name
	Functional Polymers	Queo™
	LDPE	Ipethene
	PPHP	Capilene
	PPCP	Capilene
	PPRCP	Capilene
	Speciality PP	Carmel Clear
	PPRCP	Duclear
	PPHP (Phthalate free)	Dupure
	PPCP (Phthalate free)	Dupure
	LDPE	ExxonMobil LD
	LLDPE	ExxonMobil LLD
	mPE	Enable
	mPE	Exceed
	HDPE	ExxonMobil HD
	EAA	Escor
	EVA	Scorene
	Functional Polymers	Exxelor
	PPHP	ExxonMobil PP
	PPCP	ExxonMobil PP
	PP Plastomer	Vistamaxx
	PP Compounds	Exxtral
	TPV	Santoprene
	LLDPE	Advancene
	MDPE	Advancene
	HDPE	Advancene
	LDPE	Bralen+
	PPHP	Tippelen
	PPCP	Tippelen
	PPRCP	Tippelen
	PP Compounds	Thermofil
	LLDPE	Sumitomo
	PPCP	Sumitomo
	HDPE	Sumitomo
	LDPE	Total LD
	LLDPE	Total LLD
	MDPE	Total MD
	HDPE	Total HD
	EVA	Total EVA
	PPHP	Total PP
	PPCP	Total PP
	PPRCP	Total PP
	mPPRCP	Lumicene
	MDPE	Liten
	HDPE	Liten
	PPHP	Mosten
	PPCP	Mosten
	PPRCP	Mosten

## Polyolefins

# Easy access to Total PS, PP and PE



**TOTAL**

Plastribution is **Total's core distributor in the UK**  
for polystyrene, polypropylene and polyethylene.



For all your Total material grades, contact us on  
01530 560560 or email [sales@plastribution.co.uk](mailto:sales@plastribution.co.uk)

  
**plastribution**  
let's make it work.