



## Dolphin: First series production has started

**Schwertberg/Austria – December 2011. More comfort, that is the trend regarding the design of vehicle interiors, including trucks. Moulded parts with softtouch-surfaces, which can be produced in just a single process step applying the Dolphin-method, make an essential contribution to promote this trend. The first series application has started in autumn. Daimler supplier SOLE produces cockpit covers for the new Mercedes-Benz Actros by using Dolphin.**

The production line, which is operated by SOLE S.p.A., Oderzo/Italy at the Daimler works premises in Wörth/Germany, is composed of an ENGEL duo injection moulding machine with an horizontal intermediate rotary table system, a multiple-axis industry robot and equipment for physical foaming. First of all the carrier is injected and then foamed in place with thermoplastic elastomer in one total machine cycle. That is why the Dolphin-method represents an economic alternative for the production of hard/soft components in comparison to other conventional multi-component and foaming methods.

The highly integrated manufacturing method has been developed by ENGEL Austria in cooperation with mould manufacturer Georg Kaufmann, Busslingen/Switzerland as well as with plastic manufacturer BASF, Ludwigshafen/Germany and P-Group, Filderstadt/Germany. It was presented at the K-Fair 2007 together with automobile supplier Johnson Controls, Burscheid/Germany back then. The method has experienced further development in the last few years thanks to SOLE and has been optimized for mass production. Besides ENGEL, Georg Kaufmann and P-Group are participating in the Actros Project.

“The production start proceeded as planned”, says Michael Fischer gladly, Sales Manager for Technologies at ENGEL. “The Dolphin-method’s potential is enormous due to the high level of process integration as well as of the high quality concerning the components’ surfaces. Negotiations with clients to start further series applications are currently in progress.”



More comfort in the driver's cabin: blinds and covers of the new Mercedes-Benz Actros are produced with softtouch-surfaces applying the Dolphin-method. (Picture: Daimler)



Andrea Bicego (right), Head of Research and Development at SOLE, with his team: Andrea Bellantoni, Stefano Fingolo and Luca Piovesan (from left to right). (Picture: SOLE)



The production line manufactures cockpit covers with softtouch-surface in just a single process step. (Picture: SOLE).

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