



# Where in the World is Paul Nugent?

PAUL NUGENT | MNOP

## A Global State

As I prepare for the upcoming ARM International meeting in Montreal, I have the good fortune to be able to contact a long list of friends around the world and ask for their insight into what is going on in all the various places that rotomolding thrives in. I've been buried for the longest time now in some major projects so it is refreshing to hear familiar voices and receive genuinely interested and upbeat responses to my queries. There is a network of professionals around the world without which our industry would not be quite so successful: the material engineers, the mold-makers, the machine installers, programmers, graphics sales people, release agent specialists and so on. This group sees more and hears more than they realize and often have more experience at their disposal than the average molder. Each country has their specialists and the local rotomolding community has come to depend upon them for access to the latest information and assistance. No matter how pervasive we think the Internet has become, many people still prefer to hear their news directly and will be much more convinced by someone who has experienced or tested something new personally. Just think about the network of suppliers that you deal with and how much of the world they bring to your door. As the saying goes, rotomolding is very much a global village - all we need is a global pub for those regular sessions.

The more I travel, the more it becomes clear that the personal touch in roto is always going to be needed. And I'm not just talking about me but also about the international network of travelers and speakers that are on the road constantly. People listen to those they trust and those that take the time and make the effort to be available: this means that the most successful sales people in the roto world are those that go to the remote factories, spend the extra hours at a machine doing tests and often entertain until the wee small hours. Remote teleconference meetings and online chats can never replace the learning potential in molding just one single part.

## Language Limits

How often do suppliers think that their message is out there just because they have a website, send out waves of emails and talk at major conferences all over the world? It is amazing how much information does not reach molders despite the ease of access via the Internet and the community of molders that already exists. There are regions such as China,



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Turkey, Brazil, and Russia where there are many molders who don't speak English and don't have access to the history or resources that might make their lives a lot easier. Take my book as an example, I had a recent enquiry from China from some molders who had just heard about it (9 years after the fact) - I even have a copy in Chinese, but I'm obviously not doing a good job at marketing it! And then there are the enquiries from India asking questions about what's written in my book. I don't mind answering questions but it would be nice if the copy was real...apparently a machine supplier provides a free copy with each machine! Oh, the power of Xerox. Turkey has many molders but again their information more often comes from those precious suppliers rather than direct interaction with molders in other countries. The Chinese association is trying hard to do the same but there is some frustration about the level of progress and the lack of development that seems to be taking place. These are

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certainly interesting challenges for each region as to how to make the world's rotomolding knowledge accessible and useful but they might also be opportunities to form or revamp associations.

### Market Snapshots

- Material prices are down (but still high)
- US gas prices are down
- Mold makers are busy but...
- ...molders are not yet comfortable for the longer term
- Machine makers are slow but...
- ...the second hand machine market has dried up
- Quality molders tend to be busy but...
- ...only a few molders have closed
- Uncertainty about 2011 exists but...
- ...Germany is booming
- ...China continues to grow
- ...India is thriving
- ...Australia has rain
- ...molder numbers in Africa continue to grow

Are things quite as bad as people say? We have lost a few molders here and there but not many in various markets. In the US, many molders appear to have had quite a nice year so

far, in the UK, some are asking 'what recession?', in Germany, the economy is lifting the European region as a whole (while Spain, Greece, and even Italy are holding them back), Brazil seems to be motoring along and, of course, India continues to thrive. And while China's rotomolders may not be developing as much as they would like, the economy is still growing and sucking up resources and African markets seem to be holding up as well. I plan to cover a lot more at the upcoming ARM International conference in Montreal...hope to see you there.

### SuperMolders

The era of the SuperMolders has definitely arrived, mostly tank based, but with a few custom giants too. We now have giant tank making operations on at least four out of the six continents who dominate local markets and have successfully turned commodity products into an efficient model which blends marketing and production. With their most recent acquisition, the Norwesco/Snyder/RMI tank line is now the largest rotomolding group worldwide in terms of sales. Mexico, South America, India, and Australia have their own versions (with Brazil and Mexico possibly vying for the largest tonnage consumed by a single molder). Corporate molders may not be as much fun as smaller entrepreneurs but hopefully they bring an approach that helps the image of our process...

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# Rotomolding Machine and Pulverizer.

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**Yantai Fangda Rotational Molding Co., Ltd.**

No. 21 Weisi Road, Hi-Tech Zone, Yantai, ShanDong, 264003, CHINA. Tel:086-535-6766575 Fax:086-535-6766676

E-mail: ytxiaolingli@163.com • fd@fangdaroto.com • Website: www.fangdaroto.com