



Completely Wrong Yet Totally Right

I was wrong. After working on a series of disputes and legal cases over the last few years, my latest seminar on how to 'Avoid Legal Exposure in Rotomolding' was aimed at attracting people interested in finding out how to minimize their risk by addressing key aspects of how they approach rotomolding. Instead I found that people were generally put-off by the word 'legal' in the title. It is amazing but given the litigious nature of modern society it clearly had a serious negative connotation and created a barrier to people even reading beyond the title. I learned that I need some help in the marketing department!

Thankfully there were those that did look further than the headline and after seven outings (a mix of multi-company and in-house events for individual companies) the reviews have been good. Attendees loved the course and in many cases were genuinely surprised at the extent of the content. The intention (even when it was the full 'legal' version) was to address the process from beginning to end and identify the

good habits and practices that will help rotomolders avoid most problems from developing and even in situations when something does happen to leave them better prepared to deal with it. From examples of disputes to defining performance requirements, addressing basic contracts and agreements to good process control and from how to select materials based on product performance to good QC practices, there is a wealth of information for all levels. Even old-timers and seasoned shop-floor practitioners found it useful to be reminded of all the possibilities in the process and the little things that make a big difference. But I needed a new title.

And so, in a classic case of rebranding, the new title is 'Rotomolding - Doing It Right the First Time' with a sub-heading of 'and Avoiding Legal Problems as You Go'. The content has been sharpened by interaction with recent attendees and fine-tuned to address specific molder questions but the message remains the same: good practices and good

NOTES FROM THE ROAD



The fjords of Norway are spectacular – Slartibartfast won an award for them...

habits produce good parts and prevent issues from arising. Funny to think that even when I was totally wrong, I was absolutely right...

Scandinavia Rising

The recent ARM Nordic event in Stockholm reinforced the growth and interest in rotomolding in the region. Around 75 people gathered to hear a number of key suppliers deliver useful presentations with molder specific solutions and some thought provoking analyses. There was even a visit to local molder Wavin showcasing their approach on how to produce large technical products; along with their willingness to share ideas for the benefit of the industry at large. Some 55 of the attendees stayed an extra day (bleary eyed and hung-over from excesses in the hotel bar) to hear yours-truly and the rebranded version of my seminar (see above). Most of them stayed awake - always a good sign - and I enjoyed the interaction. My compliments to Chairman Ronny Ervik on his hard work and determination to raise awareness for their members.

And while Stockholm was chilly, the little tourist town of Molde on the coast in the middle of Norway proved almost balmy (at least above freezing for part of the day). The molder of Molde, Partnerplast, specializes in marine products and

runs a very nice operation - they also occupy arguably one of the most picturesque locations of any rotomolder in the world. The photograph above was taken from their storage yard! I hope to be back but maybe when there's a little less snow on the ground...

Two Sides to the Coin

It may not apply to everyone but all the molders I've visited in the last couple of months in the USA have been exceptionally busy. Some are planning to add machines, some talking about new facilities and others looking at their lean activities to try and keep up with demand. Sounds strange? Certainly does given the backdrop of the election distraction and economic pundits, but who's complaining. Long may it last and hopefully it comes to a molder near you.

On the other hand, there are changes in the US industry again with closure of the remnants of what used to be one of the largest rotomolding companies. An amazing drop from multiple plants to zero in a few short years: lack of understanding by new management/ownership? Cannibalizing of the best parts of the business? Image deficiencies? Slow down in key markets? Who knows? Sad to see but it will be a bonus to some molders who will pick up new customers.

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