

Growth Opportunities Abound for Innovative Composites

Innovative Composites Find Increasing Application in Automotive and Other Industries - Frost & Sullivan Research

(PRWEB) February 29, 2004 --Innovative polymers and composites are dramatically broadening the range of applications and commercial production of thermoplastics. Made from both well-established and novel polymers, materials such as long glass-fibre reinforced thermoplastics, wood-plastic composites (WPC) and nanocomposites are experiencing high growth despite being relatively developmental markets.

Nanocomposites are forecast to be the highest growth market, but from a rather small base. WPCs, on the other hand, are a profit-generating market in North America although their penetration in the Europe is just beginning.

Brian Balmer, Industry Analyst from Frost & Sullivan (<http://chemicals.frost.com>) explains, □The high cost and lack of a mass market has restrained the uptake of these materials thus far, but the WPC market is set to take hold in Europe and Asia as a growing number of extruders emulate the U.S. and adopt WPC in construction applications.□

Since Europe lacks a decking market, WPC technology uptake will take place in a different manner in comparison with the United States. Focus will be on specialised applications and intricate products such as window profiles, skirting boards and some furniture applications.

Thermoplastic composites are expected to replace metals and thermosets in numerous applications as they offer remarkable advantages over these traditional materials. Durable, light, environmentally-friendly and chemically stable, composites also offer a myriad of possibilities in terms of optimising materials to suit applications. This adds further to their attractiveness.

LFT is one of the fastest growing plastics industry sectors and automotive applications account for over 95 per cent of the worldwide demand. In Europe, an annual growth rate of 10-12 percent was observed during the period 1999-2002.

□The automotive industry is the main driver for the European long fibre reinforced thermoplastic (LFT) market, which has been expanding faster than other LFT markets,□ notes Balmer. □New applications include under body panels, front-end modules, and door panels.□

Acceptance of nanocomposites has been relatively slow despite the initial promise of □a dream material for the 21st century.□ Nevertheless, the market is expected to pick up rapidly in the near future. While carbon nanofibres and nanotubes are currently under development, nanoclays are already finding applications in high barrier resins for food packaging and in some automotive applications.

□Ongoing R&D efforts, growing demand for conductive compounds, miniaturisation of electronics parts, improvements in processing machinery and the development of new applications will open more avenues for these materials,□ adds Balmer.

Continuous product improvement and innovation hold the key to the further development of innovative

composites. As globalisation and consolidation increase, developing new markets, both in terms of new end users and geographic expansion, is crucial. Lowering cost bases, speeding up innovation, and building expertise will help LFT suppliers to attract/retain automotive end users. Companies also need to enhance their customer services, and technical support.

In the WPC market, participants are increasing marketing budgets to raise awareness and adhering to building industry standards to expand revenues. Licensing, formation of strategic partnerships, and acquisition can help new companies build market share.

In the meantime, nanocomposites suppliers are focussing on developing new products through the compounding process. Efforts are on to toughened nylon nanocomposites for injection moulding and high-viscosity nanocomposites for blow moulding. Research is also on to advance polyolefin-based nanocomposites.

If you are interested in a summary of this research service which provides industry participants an overview, summary, and challenges in the European Market for Innovations in Thermoplastic Composite Technology- then send an email to Katja Feick □ Public Relations Manager at katja.feick@frost.com with the following information: Full name, Company Name, Title, Contact Tel Number, Email. Upon receipt of the above information, the summary will be emailed to you.

Title: Innovations in Thermoplastic Composite Technology

Code: B257

Background

Frost & Sullivan, an international consultancy firm, has been supporting clients' growth for over four decades. Our market expertise covers a broad spectrum of industries, while our portfolio of advisory competencies include strategic consultancy, market intelligence and management training. Our mission is to work with our clients' management teams to deliver market insights and to create value and drive growth through innovative approaches. Frost & Sullivan's network of more than 500 consultants, industry experts, corporate trainers and support staff, spans the globe with 19 offices worldwide.

Free research extracts are available to the press. For unlimited access to constantly updated chemicals market news written exclusively by Frost & Sullivan's team of industry experts visit <http://chemicals.frost.com>.

Sales Contact:

This research is available to purchase from:

Frost & Sullivan,
4100 Chancellor Court,
Oxford Business Park,
Oxford, OX4 2GX, UK.

Contact: Noel Anderson, +44 (0) 1865 398621
noel.anderson@frost.com

Press Contacts:

Europe:
Katja Feick

Page 2/4

Public Relations Manager

P: +44 (0) 20 7915 7856

F: +44 (0) 20 7730 3343

E: katja.feick@frost.com

Americas:

Nuha Kadri

Media Relations Executive, Industrial

P: 210.247.2440

F: 210.348.1003

E: nkadri@frost.com

APAC:

Donna Jeremiah

Public Relations Specialist

P: +603 6304 5832

F: +603 6201 7402

E: djeremiah@frost.com



Contact Information

Katja Feick

FROST & SULLIVAN

<http://chemicals.frost.com>

0049697703312

Online Web 2.0 Version

You can read the online version of this press release [here](#).