



Audi first, and now Daimler – after the job cuts in Ingolstadt, Germany, the Swabian company is now following suit. Around 15,000 are now to be lost, following a significant drop in profits last year. This is due to heavy investment in technical development and electric vehicle production, and to liabilities resulting from the diesel scandal.

Daimler is currently paying the price for missing out on alternative drive technologies, and cheating on its environmental emissions.

So some of the omens suggest that 2020 could be another difficult year for the automotive groups. However, that does

Bring on Electromobility!

not necessarily mean bad news for the plastics sector. I can see two points that seem positive. First, the automakers' weakness is principally a company crisis and not a demand crisis. This is clear from the rising sales figures. In 2019, VW sold more vehicles than ever, and remains the world's biggest auto manufacturer. Daimler and BMW also increased their sales figures in the past year. There are also the first indications that the market for electric cars is picking up speed. VW, for example, sold 140,000 hybrid and all-electric cars last year – an increase of 80%. And Tesla, too, with 367,500 units in 2019, increased its electric car sales by 50% year on year. The planned Gigafactory in Brandenburg, Germany, also shows that the Americans are confident about sales growth in Europe.

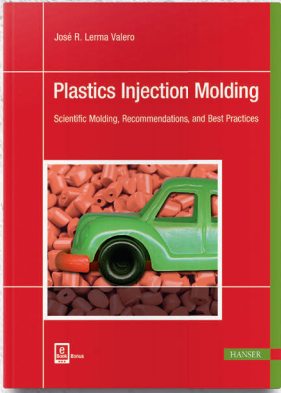
This bodes well for the plastics industry. Second, the industry is already very well prepared to meet the changing demands made on electric cars. Not only the materials manufacturers, with heat-conducting, hydrolysis-resistant and electrically insulating materials, but also plastics processors. How far the industry has already come is shown in our large Automotive Extra from page 7, featuring among other things an interview with the Nobel Prize winner Dr Akira Yoshino (p. 14.) So from the point of view of the plastics industry, bring on electromobility!

Florian Streifinger

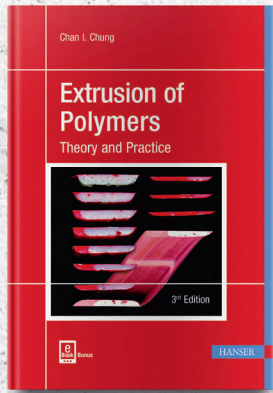
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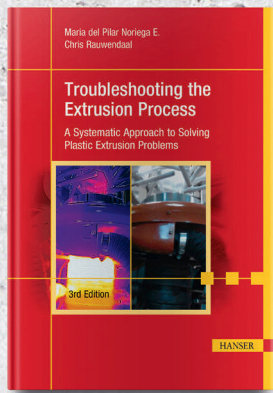
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