

# Hot off the press



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## Cloudy with a slight expectation of sun –

that sums up the present mood in the automotive industry. After the number of new approvals in Germany fell to its lowest level since 1985 last year, German auto manufacturers expect a steady recovery this year. 2.8 million new vehicles, seven percent more than in 2021, are expected to be added in Germany according to the Association of the Automotive Industry (VDA). That is not a

record, but the downturn seems to have bottomed out. Such ambivalent reports are currently pervading the automotive world, for example as regards the subject of semiconductors.

## A Mood of Crisis or a Glimmer of Hope?

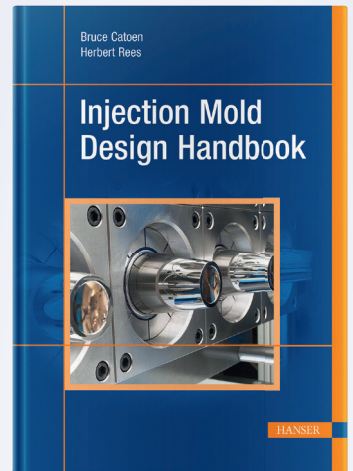
The supply bottlenecks for these critical parts continue to make life difficult for the manufacturers – as well as for many suppliers – and repeatedly result in production outages. VW's recent plans to cancel almost all the night shifts at its Wolfsburg plant in Germany after Easter caused quite a stir. However, some manufacturers were able to make use of supply difficulties. Volvo, for example, made a virtue of necessity and, last year, installed the scarce chips in particularly lucrative models, which paid off financially. Despite lower sales figures, the company thereby achieved a record revenue of 26.7 billion euros. It is also interesting that manufacturers such as Opel have given preference to their E-vehicle production in allocating the expensive electronic components, even though these vehicles generally have higher chip consumption. This indicates that the companies are particularly loathe to alienate those customers who are interested in electromobility.

What does all this mean for the plastics industry? In view of the tense situation, there is still no sign of clear skies, though there are a few tentative signs of a certain easing. It was also a smart move that the sector got on board with electromobility for quite some time (you can find some examples of this in our Automotive Special from page 10). This will pay off in the future.

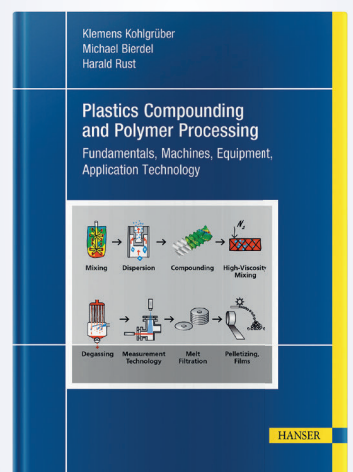
Wishing you punctual deliveries!

*Florian Streifinger*

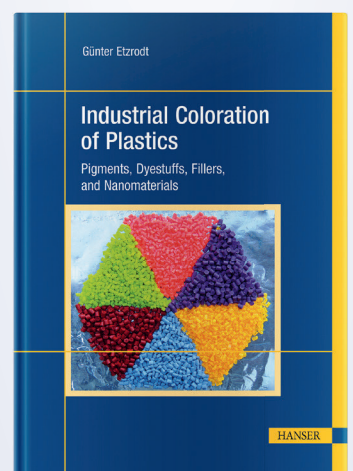
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