

# Plastics News

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## Imflux says business changes will make its 'Green Curve' open to more molders



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Gene Altonen and Mary Wagner of Imflux Inc. display custom crinkle bags made from post-consumer recycled resin with different viscosities at K 2022.

The Procter & Gamble subsidiary is changing to royalty-free access for the injection molding technology used to process difficult sustainable materials, reduce energy use and lightweight parts.

Hamilton, Ohio-based Imflux Inc. is in the midst of a transition to provide royalty-free access to its patent portfolio and proprietary know-how in a move to partner more closely with machine builders.

The firm's goal is to get the technology into more injection molding machines and plants, according to Imflux officials.

The subsidiary of Procter & Gamble Co. developed the technology, which uses low constant pressure to mold high-quality products with more versatile materials and less energy.

Nicknamed "Green Curve," because it can advance the circular economy, Imflux technology expands the capabilities of injection molding machines to [run more post-consumer resins](#).

"We believe the OEMs [machinery companies] are best positioned to maximize the Imflux technology on their machines, and we want them to have the freedom to innovate and drive synergies with their machine platform. We believe this is a better way to ensure the Green Curve is available to the industry," Imflux Chief Technology Officer Gene Altonen said in an email.

Imflux had been rolling out the technology through separate partnerships with machine builders starting with Milacron in 2018. But there were some drawbacks.

"Our previous business model made it challenging for OEMs to offer Imflux as original OEM equipment. This new model eliminates most of those barriers," Altonen said. "That is a positive thing for the machine maker and a positive thing for the future adoption of the technology."

The change to royalty-free access will allow machine builders to provide the technology as a software feature, which can be offered more efficiently and at lower cost, Altonen said.

"This also allows the OEM to integrate the Imflux technology into their innovation portfolio, driving synergistic innovation and competitive advantage for the OEM," he added.

## **Ahead of the curve**

There are hundreds of Imflux systems in operation, primarily in North America, but also Latin America, Europe and China, according to Altonen, who was behind developing the technology in 2012.

Imflux has a viscosity adjustment feature that automatically adapts the process to the

resin viscosity detected with each shot.

At a K 2022 demonstration, trade show attendees selected post-consumer resin with different viscosities that was molded into wrinkle bags by a Milacron press.

Imflux officials had recently quantified the range of viscosity changes the technology can handle with Underwriters Laboratory. The results indicated Imflux can run +/- 50 percent variation in viscosity, reduce energy consumption by 15 percent and reduce part weight by 4 percent.

"These are advantages we believe no other technology solution can match, and they are proven and available for immediate implementation, which is what the industry urgently needs," Altonen said at K 2022.

Now with machine builders offering the technology on new machines, Altonen expects a much faster industry adoption.

"With the increasing emphasis on sustainability solutions, Imflux is clearly a superior alternative to traditional molding techniques — making it even more essential to the industry," Altonen said. "It is a big change in course, but it is what is needed to finish the mission. I am committed to enable the industry to adopt what I believe is a better way to injection mold plastic parts."

### **What's next?**

The Imflux team, which stands at 125 people for the next few months, currently is focused on "transferring the know-how" machine builders will need to integrate the technology into their machine platform.

Imflux employees also are supporting P&G projects at existing and new customers, and ensuring there's a robust supply chain for the Imflux retrofit controller.

"We also anticipate continued interest to retrofit existing machines, and we will soon announce plans to support this need through a third-party provider," Altonen said.

Imflux has retrofit solutions in place with more than 20 machine builders, he added.

"This has been highly successful when installing on existing equipment, and we will enable this solution to be made available through an outsourced Imflux supply chain," Altonen said. "However, on new machines we believe machine makers can offer the technology as original OEM equipment more efficiently."

For planned installations, Imflux will continue the retrofit process under certain conditions until June 15. After that, customer installations will change to the outsourced supply chain and royalty free licensing options.

About 200,000 square feet of Imflux business space will close June 30. Altonen said the streamlined subsidiary is relocating to a "P&G space with outstanding innovation capability."

All employees won't make the move.

"Imflux has recruited 125 exceptionally talented employees from across the industry. Some of these employees will have roles supporting the new royalty free Imflux business model, and all are being supported in many ways to find their next role — both inside and outside P&G," Altonen said.

For the last decade, the CTO said Imflux teams have been on a mission to change the way the world molds by disrupting the injection molding industry with a more efficient and sustainable way to design and mold plastic parts.

"We believe getting the technology and know-how more directly in the hands of the entire industry is the right way to make the technology scalable," Altonen said.

Inline Play

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