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Knowledge pays off for Tucker at Plasticconcentrates

By Frank Esposito
 PLASTICS NEWS STAFF



Plasticconcentrates owner Ed Tucker inspects a handful of color concentrates at his company's plant in Chester, Pa.

CHESTER, PA. (Sept. 1, 11:30 a.m. EDT) -- Color compounding veteran Ed Tucker is starting to see his work pay off at Plasticconcentrates Inc., the specialty compounder he founded in the Philadelphia area.

Plasticconcentrates opened its doors in early 2001 and began commercial production in mid-2002. The Chester-based firm operates a pair of Coperion extrusion lines and employs four, but will add a third extrusion line and as many as 16 new employees by the end of next year, Tucker said in a recent telephone interview.

Tucker has 17 years of industry experience with Honeywell Inc., AlliedSignal Inc., DSM Engineering Plastics and, most recently, GE Plastics, where he helped launch that firm's Color Xpress color matching program.

"The main reason I went on my own is that I feel I've been blessed with a very unique, specialized knowledge of the coloring of engineering plastics," Tucker said. "There's only a handful of people who have this knowledge, especially in nylon, which is very difficult to color. I wanted to create jobs and benefits for my employees and for the industry."

About 80 percent of Plasticconcentrates' products are based on nylon, with the rest based on a variety of resins, including polycarbonate, polyethylene and polypropylene. The firm currently produces runs as large as 10,000 pounds, but could be increasing that maximum to 40,000 pounds if pending business deals are finalized.

Plasticconcentrates' products are sold into electrical/electronic, lawn and power tools, and consumer household markets such as detergent bottles. The firm expects to post sales of \$750,000 this year and \$1.5 million in 2004. It currently operates in a 12,000- square-foot site in Chester, but has another 60,000 square feet available for expansion.

In addition to the new extrusion line, Plasticconcentrates recently purchased a 150-ton Milacron injection press to be used in product testing. The firm already had been using a 30-ton Engel injection press.

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Tucker said the specialized nature of his company's products, which include heavy-metal-free nylon concentrates, should allow it to survive economic cycles.

"I think of us as a Starbucks, in the sense that we don't really have a direct competitor," he said.

"You could say a gas station competes with Starbucks if they sell coffee, but it's not really the same thing."

Tucker owns 92 percent of Plasticconcentrates, with outside investors owning the remaining 8 percent.

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