

Best Value PET Molds

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As brand name fillers have become global players they demand their suppliers to support them in every corner of the world. At the same time, there is tremendous pressure on mold makers to cut costs and prices to support marketing strategies requiring innovative bottle designs at a moment's notice. PETplanet had an opportunity to visit one of those mold makers that have risen to the challenge.



Wentworth Technologies Co. Ltd., the Mississauga, Ontario, Canada based group, a single source supplier, offering the whole spectrum of PET tooling.

Our title is the motto of Wentworth Technologies Co. Ltd, the Mississauga, Ontario, Canada based group of companies supplying advanced mold technologies and contract plastic processing, which has managed to become the fourth-largest mold shop worldwide within a decade. When Walter Kuskowski, president and owner of the company, bought North Ontario Mold Company in 1990, the company had just \$1.5 million in sales. Walter had just come from a 20-year management position with GE Canada. He was eager to apply the principles he had learned and practiced at GE to a company of his own. Within four years, North Ontario Mould had tripled in size and he was able to acquire Wentworth Mold in Hamilton, Ontario. Wentworth was struggling at the time financially but it had name recognition in North America and Europe. Heavily investing in R&D and a few more acquisitions has boosted sales of Wentworth Technologies to \$160 million in fiscal 2002. Wentworth now employs more than 900 people and has 14 manufacturing and service centers on three continents PETplanet's editorial freelancer, Ottmar Brandau had a chance to tour some of the facilities and talk to Walter as well as Charles Carey, Senior Vice President of the Blow Mold Group.

A frugal enterprise

The first impression one gets entering the head office of the Blow Mold Group in Hamilton is that this is a cost-conscious company. There is just nothing fancy here, the space is functional and the carpets are a little dated. "We are a frugal company", says Walter later, "I still don't fly business class, even to Europe". The workshop is just as functional and well organized. "We separated the areas of extrusion blow molds and PET blow molds to avoid conflicts in scheduling", says Charles Carey. One area is common to both: The Fast-To-Market operation. FTMTM is Wentworth's name for rapid development of both prototype and production tools. Unit blow molds are now available in 7 -14 days for cold fill and hot fill applications in PET, with 3-10 days as the next target. Large production cavities for blow molding will take less than four to six weeks for sets up to 40 cavities. To accomplish this feat, dedicated crews are working around the clock, 7 days a week.



Ottmar Brandau for PETplanet (left) spoke with Walter Kuskowski (right), president and owner of the company

A mold for every occasion

The Blow Mold Group supplies PET blow molds, conventional and quick mold systems, for all types of blow mold machinery. Through its 7 facilities in Canada, Poland, Singapore, USA & UK, Wentworth offers standard 24/7 support, as well as engineering design for new product drawings and after sales service technicians. Recent innovations in PET blow molds besides FTMTM have been “Combo” molds (interchangeable shell molds able to run on different blow molding machines); base cooling designs to reduce stress cracking in petaloid bases and decrease cycle time; and their own proprietary quick mold system for fast mold changeover of all PET blow molds.

A single source supplier

The recent acquisition of Electra Form Industries Inc. and Jersey Mold Inc. has expanded Wentworth Technologies’ ability to provide single and two stage injection and injection stretch blow tooling for the PET industry. “We can now offer the complete spectrum of PET tooling including trial runs and we want to become the #1 or #2 world-wide supplier”, states Walter. “We cover all processes, all types of machines, and all sizes of containers from 1/2 ounce to 55 gallon barrels”. With his determination and strong management skills, who would not take his goal seriously? Already he can count the 20 largest packaging companies as his customers. And an obsession with customer satisfaction is paramount to his style of business. “We are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, when our customers need us” says Walter, adding: “We know how to listen to them and give them what they want.” Wentworth provided over 1,500 stretch blow mold cavities to a global beverage project because they did everything the customer wanted including product design and after sales service support globally. The scope of Wentworth Technologies’ services to the PET industry is impressive. EFI has built 96 cavity molds and has developed small-pitch “EMPACT” tooling necessary to run 72-cavity molds in a 300-ton press and 144-cavity tools in a 600-ton press. As if this was not enough, EFI also offers multi-layer injection hot runners and tools for both barrier material and R-PET. The new “ExStream” hot runner system reduces Acetaldehyde levels in preforms and can be retrofitted on existing molds. Post mold cooling cells and crystallizing machines round up the picture of a full-service supplier to the producers of PET preforms. Full service means speed. EFI’s FTM(tm) program can make production style PET preform mold stacks in as little as 7-10 days.

Things to come

“The acquisition of Jersey Mold Inc.”, according to Mark Burrows, VP and GM of the Injection PET Group, “rounds out Wentworth Technologies’ goal of being a single source supplier of tooling to all technologies in the PET packaging marketplace”. Jersey is a small player in tools for single stage injection stretch blow molding tooling and can trial the molds in their test room. With Wentworth Technologies’ sales and distribution channels in the global market place, Jersey Mold is poised to grow rapidly.

When asked if all this expansion in so many areas will pose a huge challenge to the group, Walter is confident: "We have one of the highest R&D expenditures in the industry and we have the best people. We can do it!" He also keeps his employees motivated by giving them 16% of pre-tax profits on a quarterly basis in a profit-sharing plan. The Wentworth Group has won many awards over the last decade. We can be sure there will be more to come.