



Napoleon was apparently much shorter than this in real life...



“Rotomolding operations can be complex systems.”

Waterloo 200

On my way to Brussels recently, I passed the site of the Battle of Waterloo where preparations were well underway for 5000 people to recreate the scenes from 200 years ago. For the Belgians it was a great chance for touristic pageantry; for the British it is one of their greatest victories and they held their own celebrations in London; for the French the memory is clearly still painful – they blocked the minting of a Euro coin to mark the occasion.

Whatever your perspective, the story of the battle is remarkable. On the 18th of June 1815 at a small site south of Brussels, a mighty Emperor finally met his match. Having been defeated a year earlier and banished to Elba, Napoleon had escaped, rallied his troops and stormed his way back

to Paris to retake his throne in an adventure known as the ‘Hundred Days’. The forces of Europe gathered to overwhelm him again but he had moved first in a surprise attack two days earlier against Prussian forces at nearby Ligny just over the French border in Belgium. He believed they had been routed and had fled back to Germany – a fatal misreading of the situation.

The Duke of Wellington met Napoleon with an allied force made up of various European armies. With fewer men but knowing that the Prussians were marching to join him, he fought a defensive battle which swayed back and forth between infantry and cavalry attacks. There was much confusion throughout the day until the return of 40,000 Prussians who immediately attacked and broke the French

lines. Napoleon’s assumption came back to haunt him.

Some 44,000 men and 10,000 horses were killed or wounded that day. Napoleon abdicated and was exiled to St. Helena, the most remote outpost available at the time, to make sure he could never return. (This tiny island in the middle of the South Atlantic is still difficult to reach as my dad can attest - he recently spent a year on the island and had to endure three days each way on the weekly supply ship which shuttles back and forth from Walvis Bay in Namibia). After 20 years of conflict, this battle ushered in an era of Congresses between the Great Powers of Europe to try to avoid another pan-European war; it worked for exactly 100 years until the Great War in 1914.

So here I was 200 years after the event reflecting on assumptions and how they can come back to haunt you. Even with the best preparations, it is sometimes the smallest detail that can halt or destroy the best of projects. How many times have you been blind-sided with a seemingly minor component or step in a process which stopped you in your tracks? How many times has reputation or success been lost because someone assumed something worked or wouldn't be a problem? You'll never avoid all problems but constant questioning and constant review of details can certainly help – you might seem like a pain-in-the-you-know-what but keep asking the obvious and not-so-obvious questions to try to make sure you and your teams have covered all bases.

Rotomolding 200

Rotomolding operations can be complex systems. While often rich mixes of machines, molds, mixers, grinders, trimming, assembly, customers, orders, engineering projects, shipping, cancellations, weather, scrap, and more, they are bound together by the element which can often be the most difficult to manage: people. Sometimes it works smoothly and sometimes it's like having a 200 piece jigsaw puzzle with the lid of the box missing (and you don't even know if you have pieces missing).

I hope you are in the midst of order and everything is running smoothly but if you do happen to find yourself in a chaotic whirl, stop, take a deep breath and try to start the way you would with the jigsaw. You can't work

on everything at once, so find two pieces that fit together and can act as a starting point to build upon.

It may be hiring practices and retention issues, it may be training and teaching, it could be parting line care, it might be supply chain issues, it may be processing conditions and machine balance. How to use release agents, lighting around machines, general cleanliness, pigment staining on molds or even communication between shifts can all upset the balance and smooth flow of your process. Wherever you start, choose a couple of areas that will help stabilize an aspect of your operation and stick with these until everyone is on the same page. Then pick another piece of the puzzle and add it to the picture. Repeat as necessary. **R**

VMP Rises Above The Competition!

VMP takes great pride in over 50 years of experience in the manufacturing of rotational and injection molded inserts. We offer our customers unsurpassed quality in the services that help them remain competitive, including knowledge in engineering and manufacturing, product variety, on-time delivery, and skilled craftsmanship. And all VMP products are manufactured environmentally safe and conform to Mil-I-45208 specifications and are also ISO compliant.

The future is now:
VMP's new "QuickClicks"™ Order-On-Line is now operational and ready to meet your e-commerce needs.

You make the call:
Call today to request our Facilities and Products Catalog or visit us at: www.vmpinc.com

VMP INSERTS FOR INDUSTRY

24830 Avenue Tibbitts, Valencia, CA 91355
Phone (661) 294-9934 • Fax (661) 294-0542
Toll Free: (888) 4 VMP INC (486-7462)
www.vmpinc.com

VMP...the Sign of Quality and Reliability. Since 1960.