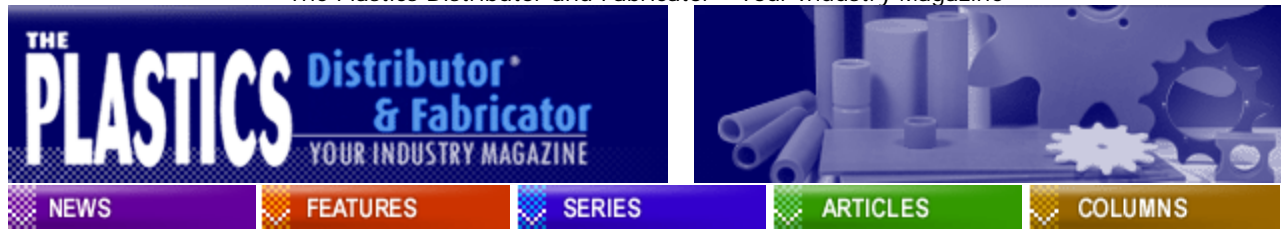


The Plastics Distributor and Fabricator - Your Industry Magazine



[Return Home](#)

Article Keyword Search

["TechKnowlogy Center" Provides Answers And Troubleshooting](#)

FEATURES

Select issue:

[List Articles](#)

"TechKnowlogy Center" Provides Answers And Troubleshooting

When building an aquarium out of acrylic, how do you calculate the necessary thickness for bearing a continuous water load? What's the coefficient of thermal expansion for acrylic? What type of abrasion resistance can you add to your store fixture? As most of us know, finding information on-line, nearly unthinkable ten or even five years ago, is now the norm for anyone who needs answers fast. Plastics fabrication is no exception, and as recent interviews with fabricators across the country attest, the web has become an invaluable resource and is playing an increasingly important role in manufacturing.

Realizing the need to provide customers and distributors with on-line manufacturing help, acrylics manufacturer CYRO Industries launched an on-line resource last year from its web site to help acrylic fabricators streamline their manufacturing. Called the TechKnowlogy Center (accessed from www.cyro.com), the site has been a success, measured by visits and by a dramatic decrease in phone calls to the company's technical service center. A number of distributors report using the TechKnowlogy Center on a regular basis and have been referring their own customers to it.

Streamlines Operations By 20 Percent

"I was trying to find out how temperature affects the bonding of acrylic," said Pete Paulson, VP of Sales for Allied Plastics, recalling the first time he visited. Allied, a sheet converter based in Minneapolis, MN, uses ACRYLITE sheet for a diverse range of applications. "In the past I would have phoned customer service and perhaps waited for a call back. Now I get answers in seconds. As an information resource, I'd say it improves productivity by 20 percent and it helps me make accurate recommendations to my customers," he added.

This type of customer response is exactly what CYRO engineers envisioned when they launched the site in March 2001. "Our goal was to create the most comprehensive acrylics web site in the marketplace," says Grant LaFontaine, Sheet Products Technical Service Manager for CYRO Industries. "We also wanted a truly interactive site that users would consult on a weekly and even daily basis," he added.

Nearly 150 years of cumulative acrylics experience went into the web site. In addition to fabrication tips, physical properties descriptions and hundreds of other facts about acrylic sheet and acrylic molding and extrusion compounds, users are invited to submit questions on-line, which are typically answered within 24 hours. These questions and answers are then added to a database of FAQ's that can be accessed at any time.

"Since launching the TechKnowlogy Center we have increased the number of FAQ's by 70 to 100 percent," reports Jeff Zgorski, CYRO's Technical Service Engineer, Sheet Products, who helped organize and populate it. "We have averaged about 2,400 visits to the site per month".

In addition to technical information, the site was launched along with the Distributor Corner, enabling CYRO distributors to access, in real time, information about orders, inventory, and the availability of products. "The Corner has helped shorten cycle times for ordering and shipping," said LaFontaine.

Educating The Acrylics Marketplace 24/7

Education is a critical benefit of any web site and Elliott Rabin, President and CEO of Ridout Plastics, said his staff uses the TechKnowlogy Center all the time. "Our people, especially the younger ones, go right to the web because it's so easy to search CYRO's site with drop-down menus and search options to get information". Ridout Plastics, based in San Diego, CA, is one of the largest single-branch plastics distributors in the nation, specializing in signs, P.O.P. displays and biotechnology applications such as vacuum tank fabrication.



Pete Schwandt, Manufacturing Supervisor at Ridout Plastics (San Diego) consults the TechKnowlogy Center Web site for acrylic fabrication tips (Photo Credit: Elliott Rabin)

Rabin remembers that before the web, product literature was all over the place. Now, a simple web search can provide fabricators and their customers all the information they need to know and it is much more up-to-date than a product brochure.

Another obvious advantage of the web is the 24/7 access, an especially important benefit for west coast distributors and fabricators. "After 2 p.m. we slow down a bit, and that's when our salespeople discuss customer issues, so when a service center on the east coast closes at 5 p.m., that's a problem for us," Rabin said. "The beauty of a web site is information and lead generation all the time. Can you imagine a web site that closes at 5 p.m.?"

Phone Calls Down 25 Percent

E&T Plastics, a plastics distributor and fabricator located in Akron, OH, accesses the TechKnowlogy Center from five different branch locations. Its Akron location cuts ACRYLITE sheet to size, and its operation in Long Island City, NY, performs CNC routing and laser cutting. "The web site has reduced our phone calls to CYRO by 25 percent and it provides a wealth of information," reported Dave Oneacre, E&T's

Branch Manager in Akron who said visiting the site has become a routine for his company's operations. "The first time I used it was to get forming temperatures for various grades of ACRYLITE sheet and the information was readily available".



The TechKnowlogy Center is part of operations at Konrady Plastics, Inc. Here machinist Michael Mackey consults the Web site at Konrady's plant in Portage, Indiana (Photo Credit: Deb Armstrong)

Oneacre remembers the most challenging job for which he used the web site was to calculate the thickness for an aquarium. "The Techknowlogy Center had a formula to use based on the width, length and height of the aquarium. I could then recommend the thickness to be used," he said.

Adding Value To The ACRYLITE Brand

Another critical benefit of the web site, Rabin feels, is reinforcing the ACRYLITE sheet brand to distinguish it from other acrylics. Rabin notes that there is a lot of "tribal knowledge" about acrylic, and often his engineers have their own expertise and experience to guide them. However, the TechKnowlogy Center serves a critical function by codifying this knowledge, and by offering users a guide of procedures and recommendations.

Citing the business goals of his own company, Rabin points out that Ridout Plastics' success is due to his company's reputation for knowledge and expertise. "Our commitment to quality is 100 percent, and having this site increases our own credibility. It's expertise that makes the difference, having access to good information, and constantly learning. That's all part of it."

Oneacre offers a similar opinion, "The level of expertise with this site is very good. We are strong believers in quality, and being able to get answers to technical questions enables us to quickly service our customers' needs," he said.

For more information, contact CYRO Industries, 100 Enterprise Drive, Rockaway, NJ 07866, 800-631-5384, Fax: 973-442-6117, Web: www.cyro.com.

[Return Home](#) | [Back To Top](#)