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SPONSOR'S INTERVIEW

- How do you use 3D printing in your company?

Materialise has three core competencies, which together embody the backbone of the 3D printing industry. Our three core competencies are software development, engineering and 3D printing.

Over the past 27+ years, we've pushed hard to strengthen that backbone and we continue to do so today. The development of the 3D printing industry goes hand in hand with the development of this backbone, which can realize entire digital supply chains, a seamless workflow from design and engineering to manufacturing.

At the Materialise Factory for 3D Printing, we aim to be as comprehensive as possible with regards to the technology. We currently offer seven 3D printing technologies, and two other manufacturing techniques derived from these. Namely: Stereolithography, Laser Sintering, Fused Deposition Modeling, Metal 3D Printing, HP Multi Jet Fusion, ColorJet and PolyJet. We also offer Vacuum Casting and TetraShell.

- Why is additive manufacturing important in your products?

We have identified certain 'drivers' for 3D Printing, a few characteristics that make a product or a part better suited for 3D Printing than conventional manufacturing technologies. One major example is complexity: when you want to design a part with internal channels, or with integrated hinges, conventional technologies won't be very helpful. This freedom of design can be used either for functionality — as in the previous example — and also for aesthetics, as the eyewear industry has already shown. Three other key 'drivers' are lead time, cost reduction, short series, and customization. Our most successful projects benefit from more than one of these factors. For instance, we work with aerospace company [328 Support Services GmbH](#) to manufacture end-use plastic parts for the Do328 fleet of planes. These are after-market spare parts, so the volumes are low. Conventional manufacturing would force 328 to invest in tooling as well as storage space for the production tools and the parts themselves. With Additive Manufacturing, 328 doesn't have to run the risk of obsolete parts or storage costs.

- What will be the role of your company in the IN(3D)USTRY?

As a gold sponsor at the IN(3D)USTRY event, we are looking forward to bringing some of our great customer stories into the spotlight. We work with leading brands globally, in industries

ranging from consumer goods to aerospace to healthcare, and some of their success stories are astounding. And none of these success stories are created in a vacuum: they are the result of intensive co-creation. In the hope that seeing successful applications in their own industry will encourage wider adoption of 3D printing, two of our partners will be presenting at the event. From Felix Espana at HOYA Vision Care, we will hear about Yuniku, the world's first vision-centric eyewear – and from Dennis Vandenbussche at Phits Insoles, we will hear about the mass customization of orthotics. Through the high-level participation at IN(3D)USTRY, we hope to show decision-makers from a variety of industries the true power of co-creation in 3D Printing.

- What are your expectations in that regard?

We want to broaden the awareness of industry in general, to help them see that the future of 3D Printing is now.

3D Printing is often considered as the technology of the future, and ironically, this is often the biggest problem. 3D Printing is actually the reality of today. When businesses find themselves distracted by 'what's next?' at the expense of right now, they risk falling behind the curve as other businesses start taking full advantage of 3D Printing.

- How do you think that 3D technology will evolve the industry in the future?

3D printing is already bringing product development benefits to businesses today – from lighter parts to shorter lead times to more nimble product development cycles. Our challenge is to spread these benefits further by encouraging wider adoption of 3D printing. Once a business has recognized the advantages of 3D printing, the main challenge becomes changing the design mind-set. Since 3D printing encourages absolute freedom of design – complexity is not a cost driver – parts can be designed in ways that wouldn't have been possible with conventional manufacturing. But designing or redesigning for 3D printing requires a new design approach, which brings us back to your first question. With the right design approach, 3D printing has tremendous potential for concrete business benefits.

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