

Protomold 'Cosmetics' Whitepaper: Free to Download

The final cosmetic appearance is one of many technical issues that must be addressed when designing a product. To help customers improve and refine the aesthetic appearance of their products and components, staff in the Proto Labs Customer Service Engineers have produced an in-depth technical guide, which is free to download from the company's website.

Shropshire, UK. JULY 1st, 2011: Proto Labs is dedicated to providing its customers with everything they need to design and manufacture high-quality prototype and low-volume production quality injection moulded parts. Their final cosmetic appearance, however, is a particularly complex issue with many variables to consider, including colour, form, and finish. It is affected by the geometry of the part, the chosen material and, of course, the moulding-process itself. With so many variables to consider, final appearance can be difficult to predict during the early design phases of a new part or product, and to complicate matters further, appearance is subjective.

Proto Labs' free-to-download, comprehensive 'cosmetics' whitepaper addresses many of these issues and offers designers invaluable advice on how to get the look and the feel they want whilst avoiding costly and time-consuming mistakes that lead to an undesired, and sometimes unexpected finish. The whitepaper is illustrated throughout, and covers all critical phases of product development, from the design challenge, to part geometry and choice of material. There's also a section detailing cross-coupled variables, and the causes and solutions to common problems.

Mr. Lee Ball Director of Operations at Proto Labs: "The first step toward achieving your cosmetic goal," he says, "is to determine the relative importance of cosmetic appearance compared to other factors, such as strength, function, and cost. This new whitepaper will help customers to work through some of



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these and other issues they might face during the design phase, and will help them to achieve the part look and the feel they want.”

Customers using Proto Labs’ free ProtoQuote® online service provide the initial part design, uploading a 3D CAD model to the Proto Labs secure servers. The ProtoQuote system provides feedback that can be used to improve the design and manufacturability of the part and because every ProtoQuote is free, customers can upload as many variations as it takes to fine tune a design to get it ready for manufacture.

“Customers can use as much or as little as the information as they like,” adds Lee Ball. “This new whitepaper will give them a better and more thorough insight into how the injection moulding process works and how they can have more control over final appearance. Of course, the final test is making the part, after which it either goes on to production or back to the drawing board for further refinement.”

End

About Proto Labs®

Based in Shropshire in the UK, Proto Labs Limited has radically changed the economics and lead times associated with the production of prototype and low-volume parts for European manufacturers. Proto Labs’ customers include companies from all sectors such as medical, aerospace, automotive and consumer electronics. With two service offerings: Firstcut® delivers machined parts (ideal for quantities of 1-10 parts) in over 30 production-intent materials including aluminium and brass while Protomold® delivers injection-moulded plastic parts (ideal for quantities of 10-10,000+) in just about any production-intent material. Using an ‘ultra-fast’ compute-cluster Proto Labs offers a web-based quoting system which includes a detailed manufacturability analysis and



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an accurate all-in production price in just hours **and** can ship orders in as little as one business day. For more information please visit www.protolabs.co.uk

About Protomold®

Protomold is the injection-moulding service offered by Proto Labs, Limited. Designers and engineers can submit a 3D CAD model of a part to the Protomold web-based quoting system, ProtoQuote®, and receive a detailed 3D model manufacturability analysis and an accurate all-in production price in hours rather than weeks. With ProtoQuote, customers can easily react to last-minute design changes, uploading as many iterations as they need to get the right model, material and cost. This in turn greatly reduces the time-to-market for a new product. In addition to all this, Protomold can deliver injection-moulded prototype and low-volume plastic parts manufactured from a choice of hundreds of production-intent materials in as little as one business day. For more information please visit www.protomold.co.uk

About Firstcut®

Firstcut is the machining service offered by Proto Labs, Limited. Designers and engineers can submit a 3D CAD model of a part to the firstcut web-based quoting system, FirstQuote®, and receive a detailed 3D model manufacturability analysis and an accurate all-in production price in just hours rather than weeks. With FirstQuote, customers can easily react to last-minute design changes, uploading as many iterations as they need to get the right model, material and cost. This in turn greatly reduces the time-to-market for a new product. Firstcut allows customers to make a fully functional prototype much earlier in the development cycle from a range of over 30 production-intent materials such as ABS, Nylon, PEEK, aluminium or brass produced in as little as one business day. For more information please visit www.firstcut.eu/gb



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