

Auto Industry to Maintain its Supremacy

- PRASAN FIRODIA
President, The Aluminum Casters'
Association of India

The Aluminum Casters' Association of India (Alucast) is a registered body, managed by a Board of Trustees. The main goal of the Association is to help casting manufacturers - and thereby the supporting industries also - to achieve growth in their business. Keeping pace with the times, Alucast has revised the course contents in its training programmes to meet the changing needs of user industries, the automobile sector being the largest of all. Alucast faculty offer training courses and workshops, both in-house as well as class room type, the course contents and duration being custom designed for each client.

Mr. Prasan Firodia is currently the President of The Aluminum Casters' Association of India (ALUCAST). He is also on the Executive Committee of the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers.

Along with that Mr. Prasan Firodia, is the Managing Director of Force Motors since 2009. He is graduate in Business Administration from the European Business School and Regents College, London, UK. After completing his education, he joined Jaya Hind Industries (a group company) in 2002 as Director Operations. At Jaya Hind, he focused on harnessing the latest technology from world leaders in the field of casting, setting up world class manufacturing facilities, and implementing total quality management. He has been instrumental in transforming the company to be a preferred supplier to almost all leading national and international automobile manufacturers for high precision and critical components like cylinder blocks, cylinder heads, transmission cases, etc. Under his leadership, Force Motors has entered into the field of personal vehicles with Force One, which was launched in August 2011. A premium MPV is expected to be launched in 2013.

"Going by the current trends, growth rate of about 10% per annum can be a safe guess for the die casting industry for the next few years", says Mr. Prasan Firodia, President, The Aluminum Casters' Association of India in an exclusive interview with Metalworld. Excerpts:



- PRASAN FIRODIA



How do you see the present status of Aluminium Industry globally and within India?

- The global consumption of Aluminium is increasing steadily. The world consumption of Aluminium is estimated to increase from 44 million metric tons in 2012 to 74 million metric tons in 2030. Aluminium is favored by product designers because it leads to considerable reduction in the weight of the part as compared to the same part made from Cast iron, steel or other heavy non ferrous metals. This is particularly relevant for automotive components because reduction in vehicle weight reduces fuel consumption and carbon emissions. The developed nations are also using increasing amounts of Aluminium to meet their stringent emission norms.

Having said that, the increasing labour costs, energy costs and strict regulations of environmental issues has the Aluminium industry shifting volumes from the developed countries to the Asia-Pacific region. India stands to benefit in the current scenario albeit with some caveats.

In truth, while developed nations are resorting to increased off-shore procurement for die cast components; it is a reality that parts which warrant relatively lower levels of accuracies, technologies and expertise are being pushed harder. To have a global dominance especially as compared to China and other emerging countries, India will have to up its game. Our global competitiveness and relevance lies in our moving up the value chain. We need to acquire, absorb and apply technical expertise and competencies to gain increasing self reliance and confidence. We need to evolve to cater

to not only low value auto component manufacturing requirements but also the high end high value added parts, sub systems and assemblies.

As die-casting is the major downstream of Aluminium. What is the present status of this industry?

- The Aluminium die casting industry is emerging as one of the fastest growing industries across the world. It is predicted that the Auto industry, the largest end user segment of Aluminium die casting, will continue its dominance based on the significant demand for secondary Aluminium and die castings. Approximately 65 - 70% of all castings produced by the die casting process are for automotive castings.

Going by the current trends, growth rate of about 10% per annum can be a safe guess for the die casting industry for the next few years. However, this will be largely influenced by the output of the automotive industry itself.

What are the Major applications and User industries of Die - Casting Industry?

- The Aluminium die casting industry provides castings with applicability ranging from domestic appliances to electric / electronic network and transmission systems and automotive parts. The Auto industry is the largest end user of the die castings and it is estimated that 65% - 70% of all castings produced are used in the auto castings.

What will be the effect of slowdown of auto-industry in aluminum die-casting?

- India is the 2nd largest manufacturer of the two wheelers and 5th largest manufacturer of passenger

cars in the world. A slowdown in the consumption of these vehicles will definitely impact the production of the casting requirements.

The auto component industry although is transforming itself to a global supplier. An analysis pegs that new OEMs are setting up international procurement offices in India. With these factors working in our favor, it is only a matter of time that we come out of this cyclical slowdown and resume growth.

What are the present activities of Aluminium Casters Association of India and how it is helping to upgrade the industry for the future?

- Aluminium Casters' Association of India (Alucast) has its activities centered around the current need for creating platforms and programs to initiate knowledge sharing on a regular basis.

ALUCAST's current activities include:

- Training courses, workshops, conferences, seminars and exhibitions, where a platform is provided to discuss the very basic to the highly advanced aspects of die casting.
- Here the delegates include personnel from tool design, process design and control, quality assurance, casting procurement, castings production and post casting processes, and at different levels up to managers and department heads.
- Organization of Industry Visits to other die casting units and supporting industries (tooling's, dies, consumables, heat treatment, machining, laboratories)
- Enhancement of understanding customer requirements and peer capabilities, requirements and limitations.
- Organization of lectures and seminars by experts to promote awareness and adoption of global best practices
- Publish bi-monthly Journals, Technical Reference Hand books, Training Modules
- Promote newer associations, collaborations and alliances.
- Promotion of events via bilateral arrangements

