

# Oakland Tech News™

A DETROIT AUTO SCENE® NEWSPAPER

VOL. 30 NO. 38

CIVIC WEEKLY NEWSPAPER OF THE AMERICAN AUTO INDUSTRY IN AUBURN HILLS AND ENVIRONS

OCTOBER 1, 2012

## Talent Townhall: Harness the Power of Talent

by Gerald Scott

Visitors to the Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce's "Talent Townhall" luncheon got quite a treat last week as three local executives gave strategies and advice for "Harnessing the Power of Talent" in one's company.

That is, the luncheon talks from three different executives all focused on hiring, retention and doing more with less as many firms slowly begin hiring again coming out of the 2008-90 recession.

Plante Moran Chief Marketing Officer Jeff Antaya, Bayer Material Science Vice President Bruce Benda and City of Auburn Hills City Manager Pete Auger all described strategies for hiring and retaining talent based on how this topic plays out within their respective organizations.

Auger said, "Try to be honest, it's that opaqueness, and openness and building that trust."

"In our organization, we're fortunate - we've changed and we've adapted."

"We've lost people through attrition that we haven't replaced and that put a lot of pressure on the people that stayed there to be innovative."

"The message they hopefully received from our office is we're not replacing that person is the

bad news, but the good news is that you still have a job - that's not always received well. (Or) we're not getting a raise this year."

"Look what everyone else is doing. So we try to paint the picture of what's going on in the world. And try to push that through. Reality changes, so we're adapting."

"Before the recession hit in 2008 and our organization is 26 percent lower in personnel than other organizations our size . . . you read about communities laying off 25 percent of their workforces, we never got to that level because this city has always run very lean as an organization."

There was an overriding theme at the meeting of many businesses being caught in a conundrum of not wanting to lose the talent they already have on board - the cost of hiring can be high - so how do all of these firms keep and reward employees in such a way that they feel wanted, trusted and see a career path within their organization?

It's more of a juggling act for corporate human resource departments than one might first expect - a laid-off or terminated employee may not be replaced immediately, so how do the legacy employees rally and prosper in the face of having diminishing staff or resources to do increas-

ingly demanding jobs?

That's the rhetorical question most businesses face today, the speakers said.

Added Bayer's Bruce Benda, "Openness and honesty are real critical. Automotive is a big part of our business, but we're also big in industry."

"We're fortunate a little bit because we have three businesses, so we get insulated a bit from the type of crisis we had not too long ago."

Benda said that Bayer's ex-CEO charted a course of restructuring in anticipation of the trouble they would face in 2008-09.

"The thing that (he) believed in was being open and honest with the plans," said Bender.



A.H. City Manager Pete Auger

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Chamber of Commerce Director Denise Asker, far right, joins the chat.



## Continental to Add 300 in Auburn Hills

AUBURN HILLS - The Auburn Hills Planning Commission has approved Continental's request for new developments that encompass a \$6 million investment and as many as 300 new jobs, primarily for the supplier's South Campus building at 2400 Executive Hills Drive.

Among the physical additions to the South Campus are more office space, vehicle lab testing space and more. South Campus investment is projected to be about \$4.8 million and 170 of the new staffers.

North Campus investment, at One Continental Drive, is planned to be an interior renovation project budgeted at \$1.5 million, making the entire project investment at about \$6 million.

Continental CEO for the North American region, Samir Salman, described Auburn Hills as a very strong business partner for it.

## Chrysler Takes Sponsorship Role for 'Taste Of Auburn Hills'

AUBURN HILLS - Here comes the 2012 edition of the Taste of Auburn Hills social and charity fundraising event.

The Taste is a fundraiser for the Auburn Hills Chamber of Commerce and donates a percentage of its proceeds to the Avondale School District's Blessings in a Backpack program serving 400 needy families.

This year's Taste features 20 area restaurants, entertainment from SoundWave Music and Arts and Oakland University's Jazz Band, beer and wine vendors, an ice carving demonstration and networking with 500-600 area professionals. The event will be held 5-8 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 11, at the Walter P. Chrysler Museum.

Chrysler Group is Lead Sponsor for this year's Taste of Auburn Hills. Oakland Community College's Culinary Studies Institute the Presenting Sponsor, and Delphi is Community Outreach Sponsor.

Auburn Hills Chamber Executive Director Denise Asker explained that the Taste provides an ideal networking and client appreciation opportunity. "The Taste is designed for entertaining clients and employees," explains Asker. "Sponsors and area businesses use this affordable event as a unique networking opportunity."

Gold Sponsors for the event include Oakland University, Great Lakes Crossing Outlets, Citizens Bank and YourSource Management Group. Silver Sponsors are Baker College of Auburn Hills, Genesis Credit Union and Hirotec, and the Bronze Sponsors are Consumers Energy, Andrews Hooper Pavlik, Meadow Creek Village, OU-MSU Federal Credit Union, DRI International, InTouch Credit Union, Pilchak Cohen and Tice, and Hartland Insurance Group. Other sponsors include Fieldstone Winery, Powers Distributing, the City of Auburn Hills, Plante Moran, Oakland Press, HOUR Magazine, MG Photography and the Walter P. Chrysler Museum.

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## Volt Was Central Topic at Henkel Supplier Day

by Gerald Scott

Funny thing about the Chevrolet Volt these days.

On one hand, this December marks two full years in the market, so it's safe to claim that it's become a known quantity.

But on the other hand, it's still a technical marvel that turns heads most anywhere the car appears here in late 2012.

Most recent case in point was supplier Henkel, with a big office and factory complex in Madison Heights.

GM brought in a Volt to honor "Henkel Day" last week, literally marking the firm's anniversary founding date, which was Sept. 26, 1876, in Germany.

Here, 136 years later, Henkel is a thriving global concern, providing industrial and automotive products worldwide.

Henkel provides significant parts and systems to Volt, so then again maybe it wasn't all that surprising that they cooed over the unique plug-in hybrid vehicle from GM like they did.

Henkel's Patrick Apsey, Key Account manager, General Motors North America for the supplier, discussed the supplier's contributions to the Volt.

"To start with, the metal pre-treatment, which enhances corrosion protection on the vehicle. It's a real important step to clean the metal and prepare it for the next step, which is Eco," he said.

"Henkel has a lot of options for increased aluminum content, which the (GM) Detroit Hamtramck plant will be seeing in the future, so we have a lot of our sustainable technologies for lightweighting, things like that will be available for the Volt."

"It's an aqueous process, the vehicle comes in and it's either sprayed or dipped. It's about a

10-stage process, we have an on-site person at Detroit Hamtramck. We've (been an) integrated supplier in the plant for over 19 years . . .

"GM relies a lot upon Henkel and our expertise, and he (Henkel rep) actually takes care of this treatment line, this coating line."

Note that the Volt plant is down right now for retooling to allow the 2014 Chevrolet Impala to be built there, so when the plant comes back up later in October, it will be building the Chevrolet Volt/Opel Ampera, Chevrolet Malibu and finally the pre-production cars for the Impala, which won't be assembled for customers until early next year. So Henkel is familiar with GM Hamtramck, indeed.

"All the vehicles that run through the plant go through our pre-treatment system . . . they all see our aqueous coatings," said Apsey.

"There are some other technologies we have down at D-Ham, we have the water-based purge so that when they're painting the vehicle and need to clean their lines, they send a Henkel cleaner (liquid) through the line."

"We're also upstream at the automotive component suppliers. At the GM Powertrain plant in Flint, we have the Loctite RTV gasketing, so a lot of parts that are assembled into the Volt happen outside of Detroit (prior to final assembly)."

"Another big part of our business is our acoustics and struc-

tural business, which is preformed parts. We've got paintable tapes on the vehicle, one is actually applied down at the Hamtramck plant and the other one is a seal that is applied at a GM Brownstown facility - it's a butyl rubber seal on the battery."

"We have a lot of content on the vehicle, we have some overmolding macro-melt products on the vehicle as well, that's at one of our Tier suppliers, Lear Corp."

Visiting Henkel's Madison Heights facility on Henkel Day, with the Volt, was GM's Richard Smearman, who is the Paint Area manager at GM Hamtramck. Prior to that, Smearman was also Plant Quality manager.



Henkel's Paul Drzyzga, Jr., right, director, OEM North America, speaks at Volt reception.

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