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Evonik Resource Efficiency

1.) What’s the biggest challenge your customers are asking you to tackle today?
We are seeing a continued strong increase globally in the tire industry’s demand for silica. The main reasons for this are the ever increasing demand for low-rolling resistance and safe tires (lower fuel consumption and shorter braking distance thanks to improved wet-grip) and the demand for larger tire dimensions. We have systematically expanded our capacities in recent years in order to be able to meet this increased demand for silica. Our new plant in Brazil went on stream in 2016, and in the third quarter of this year we will also start up our new plant in the USA. Construction is also underway in Turkey to extend the plant capacity by an additional 40,000 metric tons, which will be available in 2020. Working in close partnership with our customers, we are continuously facing up to the challenge of reliably providing our local customers with custom-tailored future-proof products in the amounts they need. This is what Evonik and our tire silica brand ULTRASIL® stand for.

2.) What trends are pushing your company to innovate?
Evonik’s experts work continuously in close partnership with the tire industry to develop innovative solutions for optimizing tire performance. Some of the challenges we face when developing our new products for the market are performance and the associated fuel savings, reduced CO2 emissions, shorter braking distances, and lowering weight while retaining driving safety. Our ULTRASIL® 7800 GR product for particularly large vehicle tires for SUVs and all-season tires marked the start of the next step in innovation. With this product, which gives tires the necessary stiffness, Evonik has found the right mix to ensure driving pleasure, driving safety, and resource efficiency all at the same time.

3.) How will the supply chain for tire manufacturing differ in five years from what it is today?
In the next few years we will make major strides toward Industry 4.0. This means that inventory management at our customers and suppliers will be digitalized and interlinked, and production planning, orders, deliveries etc. will be initiated and monitored electronically. This will accelerate supply chain processes and make them more flexible.

4.) When it comes to the future of the tire industry, what opportunities are you most excited to embrace?
Driving safety remains a focus of our product development work but we are also focused on serving future market trends such as the special requirements for tires for electric vehicles. An important factor here is further reducing rolling resistance in tires in order to increase the range in electric cars. These tires are taller and narrower, which means that the need for optimal deceleration when braking is increased due to the reduced contact area.