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A shield against noise, vibration

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A TWO-YEAR-OLD company is set to place Malaysia on the international automobile accessory map, with various innovative products for the motorist.

DAG Electroponic Sdn Bhd recently signed a contract making EON Trading Sdn Bhd, the national distributor for the "Acoustic Shield".

The product, a semi-synthetic elastomer-based sheet, which is coated with a pressure-sensitive adhesive on one side, is affixed onto the inside of the vehicle's bonnet.

It serves to reduce the transfer of engine heat and vibration, and works as a noise suppressor as well.

DAG Electroponic's managing director Darren Aster Gunasekera told the New Straits Times that the company spent almost RM400,000 to develop the product, which can be fitted on any vehicle.

"Designed for do-it-yourself buffs, the Acoustic Shield exceeds the standards for automotive usage set by Sirim, the Warrington Laboratories in the United Kingdom and other approving bodies.

"It is washable, weather-durable, and resistant to fire, mildew, chemicals and fluids, including battery acid.

"Besides the bonnet, it can also be fitted inside the vehicle's boot, door panels, and floorboard for excellent sound-proofing effect," Gunasekera said.

The company's general manager (marketing) Pandian Vijayarengam said DAG Electroponic had received enquiries from American, Australian, German, French, and Italian automobile manufacturers to supply the product - to be sold in the international market under the brand name Vibramat - for their vehicles.

"We are now having discussions with representatives of two Japanese automobile manufacturers, to supply the product as original manufacturer's equipment. But these discussions are at an early stage.

"Through our website www.vibramat.com we have also received enquiries for distribution rights in Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Norway," he said, adding that the company was inviting distributors to market the product in other Southeast Asian countries.

On the global forecast for the product, DAG Electroponic's executive director Toh Teck Boon said based on current trends in vehicle sales, the company expected turnover from its exports to reach RM20 million within the next three years.

"We expect sales in the local market to hit RM2 million by December. In a matter of time, we believe the Acoustic Shield will become standard fitting in all new vehicles sold in the country.

"Hence, annual sales for Malaysia by the end of 2004 are conservatively forecast at about RM15 million."

The company's products are being displayed until Sept 3, at the "Expo Cintai Malaysia 2000" exposition held at the Malaysia International Exhibition and Convention Centre in Kuala Lumpur.

Gunasekera added that the company also specialised in two other areas - audio amplifiers and automotive devices.

DAG Autoionics, a subsidiary of DAG Electroponic, is responsible for development in these areas.

At present, a prototype of the E-Cool - an automotive electronic control device is undergoing final testing.

Powered by the vehicle's battery, the product is designed to cool the interior of the cab. The vehicle may be parked in the sun but the cab stays cool.

This device, and another to automatically switch on the headlights when visibility is poor, are slated for production in March.

Both products, which have patents pending, are the brainchild of Gunasekera who said they represent "total electronic solutions to current automotive problems".

Located at the Shah Alam Industrial Park, DAG Electroponic, which was incorporated in August 1998, has a paid-up capital of RM1.3 million. All funds are internally generated.

Gunasekera said the company was in the process of restructuring, with a view to seeking a listing on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange in 2002.

"Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has given the country a vision to work towards technological advancement.

"We believe that through our innovative and state-of-the-art Malaysian-made products which employ cost-effective materials and production methods, we can help propel the country towards achieving that vision," said Gunasekera.

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