

# 3M *Holding Fast*

*High Performance Solutions for the Automotive Aftermarket*

Vol. 1 No. 24

## A Better Way to do an Old Thing—*Tape Attached Extruded Trim, Seals & Weatherstrip*

Products across industries and across time have been protected from dust, debris, noise, bumps, bruises and the elements by rubber trim and seals. From the more obvious applications like automotive windshields and clean room door edges to the more obscure like internal TV parts, trim manufacturers have the seal to fit the deal. Today, 3M™ Weatherstrip Attachment Tapes have replaced glues, rivets, clips, staples, screws and wire carriers as the means of attachment on a broad range of sealing applications.

Take the automotive industry for example. Vehicle consumers today demand a quiet, peaceful ride. We are less tolerant than ever of hissing windows and drafty doors, and the right weatherstrip on door and window seals can make a remarkable difference. Mechanical fasteners cannot provide the water-tight, noise-reducing continuous seal afforded by



**The Dodge Durango utilizes seals that are attached solely with 3M™ Weatherstrip Attachment Tape on both the B-Pillars and lower door dust seals on all four doors.**

weatherseals attached with 3M weatherstrip attachment tapes. The ability of these unique 3M tapes to expand and contract in weather change is unmatched by mechanically attached seal assemblies.

Griffith Rubber Mills, in Portland, Oregon, opened its doors in 1906 in the business of manufacturing rubber-covered rolls for the pulp and paper industry.

The business developed into mechanical goods and then extrusions manufacturing. “Initially, fastening systems were mechanical, with a need for screws, or to be inserted into a



metal lip, dove-tailed, or slid into receivers,” said company vice president, Max Gregory. “When 3M weatherstrip attachment tape came on the market, we began using it primarily for door seals, which must have a tenacious, continuous grip along the entire length. We have found no easier, more reliable way to attach door seals than with this 3M tape.”

Today, Griffith Rubber sells custom-made molding and air induction parts for semi trucks, windshield gaskets for transportation industries, trim strips for fenders in the heavy truck market, and various parts used in school bus, RV, farm and construction equipment applications.

Gregory described an interesting and unique application for 3M weatherstrip tape. “We use the tape on fuel tank insulator straps in order to hold the strap in place during offline assembly. The parts are taken to the line with the rubber extrusion held to the tank using the tape, which holds up reliably for transportation. This job used to require the work of two people and now only one is needed. It eases the process and saves time.”

On that note, George Phillips, plastics manager for VIP Rubber Company in La Habra, California, said, “The biggest role 3M tapes play in our business is to save both manufacturing and installation time for our customers. Its use requires no installation tools, no holes or grooves to cut and no mechanical fasteners.”

Take for example, outdoor furniture. When a table is being designed for outdoor use, it often requires that a groove be cut around the perimeter in which trim is then pressed and secured. By using 3M tape instead, the manufacturer eliminates the need for groove cutting and can simply leave the surface flat.

“3M™ Weatherstrip Attachment Tape can replace glues and other mechanical fasteners, and the result is a cleaner finish with no cutting and adjustment,” said Phillips. “The added cost of 3M quality is overridden by time savings in the installation and finishing processes, and the final improved aesthetics.”

VIP Rubber was founded in 1961 as a rubber manufacturer job shop selling to industries across the board. Today the company produces rubber molding and calendar sheeting in roll form for gaskets and plastic extrusion, for industries from automotive to housing to aerospace.

Trim-Lok, Inc. and Rubber Trim Products (RTP) of Buena Park, California, are developing business opportunities using 3M Tapes in a host of different markets. According to marketing manager, Larry Chaffers, “Leaky and rattling hatches are the single biggest problem we’ve seen in the marine market on both new and older boats. We are aggressively pursuing this market with a solution: our Rubber Seal® and Hatch Seal products, which are applied to the entire perimeter of the hatch using 3M weatherstrip attachment tapes.”

Because marine is considered a luxury market, buyers are willing to invest in safeguarding their purchase. “Seals that attach with 3M tape may seem more expensive than using other attachment methods, but there is not a better all-around attachment solution than 3M weatherstrip tape. And boat buyers rarely question the cost if their problem is solved for the long haul,” said Chaffers.

Trim-Lok is extensively involved in the RV industry, its largest market. Chaffers explained that low-to-the-ground storage areas on RVs typically take on dirt, dust and moisture, making these storage areas perfect candidates for the company’s Rubber Seal® products attached with 3M tape. “Because there are no gaps in tape coverage, dirt and moisture are completely blocked out, noise is reduced, and the seal is reliably and permanently attached,” Chaffers commented.

RTP has converted several very large customers from glue or mechanical fasteners to 3M tape attached seals by enabling them to discover its performance superiority and total-applied cost savings benefits. “Once customers perform an actual cost study comparison and trial the tape system for their own applications, they are convinced,” said RTP’s national sales manager, Ron Jackson. According to Jackson, “This market education effort regarding total cost versus value for tape attached seals has led to

substantial growth in our custom rubber profile business.”

Dan Martinson, general manager at LTI Flexible Products in Newnan, Georgia, said, “We use 3M tape for ease of assembly and where temperature resistance is important. The tape is designed to expand and contract in changing environments, unlike other attachment products, and this makes a lot of difference for many applications.”

Martinson recently used 3M tape to win business at Mack Truck. He designed a tape-attached weatherstrip seal that eliminates door leaks on rigs. “Mack Truck was using a wire carrier assembly with many varying flange thicknesses around the perimeter of its truck doors. The doors continued to leak, requiring repeated repairs and customer frustration. We designed and tested a rubber seal that attaches using only 3M tape. Problem solved. We trained Mack installers on how to use the system, and though the seal assembly is more expensive, overall cost on repair materials and time is greatly reduced.”

Bill Dorton of Clean Seal, Inc., a growing enterprise in the South Bend, Indiana, area, said, “The majority of our extruded parts are attached using 3M weatherstrip tapes. I have never sold anything that I have more confidence in than the high quality of 3M tape systems.”

While that is flattering to 3M, Dorton said that it isn’t just fluff. “To be a successful manufacturer in this industry, we must carefully assess the challenges and needs for each application, whether it be a harsh environment, stress on the application area, noise concerns, etc. We design our products to meet the needs, and 3M tape is an important part of that equation.”

Clean Seal has enjoyed tremendous growth serving the RV, utility truck and marine industries since opening in 1978. The company stocks EPDM, silicone, neoprene, nitrile and dual durometer extrusions to meet customers’ needs for quick delivery.

Although extruded seals for basic weatherstrip applications have been around for many years, 3M™ Weatherstrip Attachment Tape has helped simplify processes for the seal makers and their customers across industries. Its use enables the development of certain complicated seal applications that would have been difficult or impossible to attach with mechanical fasteners.



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