EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3D PRINTING: CHEMICAL COMPANIES RISK LOSING THEIR DOMINANCE

CURRENT CAMELOT STUDY SHOWS STRATEGIES NEED TO CATCH UP

Chemical companies are too narrow in their thinking when it comes to the effects of 3D printing technology. Although the technology is thought to promise significant market growth with strong impacts on the traditional production processes, few chemical companies see this as reason to adapt their strategies or business models. This, in turn, could lead to them losing their dominant position within their value chains. These are the findings of a study by consulting specialists CAMELOT Management Consultants.

A total of 220 decision-makers within the 3D printing value chain were questioned online for the study, and the participants all agreed that the market for 3D printing is set to grow strongly. The reasons for this are the emergence of new markets, improved printing technologies, and the progression of knowledge within the industry.

Sticking with the tried and tested

Nevertheless, only around 40% of the chemical companies questioned expect to see a significant impact on the strategic matters of product portfolio, prices, competitiveness or innovations. “Overall you get the impression that chemical companies feel very at home with their tried and tested commercial approaches. The true potential of 3D printing in relation to business models and strategies seems not to be appreciated in many cases. If the companies don’t revise their approaches here, then they will be losing out on important business”, says Dr. Josef Packowski, Managing Partner at CAMELOT, commenting on the study.

The empirical results of the study were supplemented by in-depth interviews with 3D printing experts from the chemical industry. Dr. Erik Reuther, New Business Development at specialty chemicals corporation Clariant, is one of those who sees exciting prospects for 3D printing: “In my opinion, the 3D printing market will generate scalable business for material manufacturers.”

Tobias Caspari, Head of Heraeus Additive Manufacturing at Heraeus, emphasizes: “At the moment, standard materials dominate the market for 3D printing, but this is set to change. We’re going to see disproportionate growth in new and specialty materials like precious metal alloys or amorphous metals.” The experts agree that it’s all about finding the right balance between an aggressive approach to the material market for 3D printing and the careful evaluation of market potential.

Focus on dedicated market segments

According to the CAMELOT study, the 3D printing business makes sense for chemical companies only in market segments in which value chain stages can be skipped and the system costs along the value chain are lower than in the current status quo. “For chemical companies it is therefore extremely important to thoroughly review the market segments they are targeting with regard to technical feasibility and market potential. Based on these results, they then need to select the suitable business model”, is the recommendation of Dr. Sven Mandewirth, Partner Chemicals at CAMELOT.

You can download the complete study free of charge at https://www.camelot-mc.com/en/study/shaping-new-business-models-for-3d-printing/.