

Colin Austin

That Colin Austin became Australia's most successful exporter of technical software speaks volumes for the ingenuity of his vision, but also his capacity to convert that vision into a hugely successful global business.

More than 48 countries have used Austin's software, which was designed to take the guesswork out of injection moulding. Indeed, prior to his development of predictive software and expansion of his business, the manufacturing process had largely been based on trial and error, and gut instinct.

An engineering graduate from Sheffield University, Austin identified the opportunity to vastly improve the moulding process while working in Melbourne as R&D Manager with Johns Hydraulics making injection moulding machines, and subsequently lecturing at Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology where he started simulating the moulding process with automated calculations.

Austin mortgaged his house to buy a first generation microcomputer and formed Moldflow in 1978. His aim was to simulate the flow of plastic into a mould before production

Moldflow provided the world-first ability to visualise filling patterns and predict temperatures and pressures throughout the mould to improve the design of the mould and the manufacturability and strength of the product. This eliminated much of the uncertainty in product development, reducing costly re-designs of parts and moulds.

By 1992 Moldflow had been installed in more than 1,000 sites worldwide, adopted by manufacturing giants in the USA, Korea, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom. The software covered plastic flow, mould cooling and shrinkage, warpage and structural analysis for thousands of polymer grades, allowing engineers to optimise product design, mould cavity layout, material selection and mould processing conditions.

Austin's company won a long list of awards between 1980-97, including honours for technical Innovation, the Governor of Victoria Export Award, the Department of Trade in Association with Confederation of Australian Industry's Export Award for outstanding achievement, and the international Fred O. Conley Award for outstanding achievement in plastics engineering and technology.

Moldflow was acquired in 2008 by multi-national giant Autodesk for \$297US. Austin moved on from his plastics focus, re-directing his energy to his environmental interests of soil and water - developed the wicking bed system which is now used universally.

He became obsessed with the underlying causes of the modern health epidemic epitomised by diabetes, obesity, strokes and dementia. He realised that our bodies have an intelligent control system with our brain and gut cells communicating to regulate our bodies but this is being compromised by our modern food system.

He developed Gbiota beds to breed the beneficial biology to regenerate our gut biology as part of regenerative agriculture.

Austin firmly believes that innovators must take responsibility for the social results of their innovations as technology is now dominating our lives.