The Oliver Wyman Harbour Report Team Conducts 1,000th Manufacturing Facility Visit

Detroit, July 15, 2014 – Earlier this year, Oliver Wyman’s Harbour Report team marked a key milestone making its 1,000th automobile manufacturing plant assessment visit to Volkswagen’s new Chattanooga, Tennessee plant.

To accomplish the goals of providing the most comprehensive evaluation of the automotive industry’s performance internationally, Oliver Wyman’s global management consultants visit dozens of automotive plants worldwide each year as part of the Report and our consulting engagements.

“We don’t just look at an operation’s numbers each year, we go inside the plant and listen to plant leaders and workers on the shop floor to see first-hand how their plant functions and how the plant is utilizing what we consider their greatest resource – their workforce,” said Ron Harbour, a senior partner in Oliver Wyman’s automotive practice.

“The unrivalled combination of our plant visits and extensive strategic, organizational, and operational experience is what separates Oliver Wyman and the Harbour Report from our competitors,” said Andy Chien, managing partner of Oliver Wyman’s North American automotive practice.

The $1 billion Volkswagen operation in Chattanooga started production in April 2011 producing the 2012 Volkswagen Passat designed for the U.S. market. The plant has capacity to build 150,000 units a year and serves as a key component in Volkswagen Group’s strategy, Mach 18, under which the company plans to become the global economic and environmental leader among automobile manufacturers by 2018. This strategy includes sales of 1 million vehicles in the United States by 2018.

“The plant was very impressive and was set up to be one of VW’s most competitive plants globally. Most notable was the active small team process with energetic involvement by all workers in new ideas and continuous improvement,” Harbour said.

The challenges and issues every manufacturer must face today is endless, from advanced technologies and materials, increased complexity, workforce skill levels, and the fine balance of automation and human capital.

“Today’s global automotive landscape looks very different from ten or even five years ago, from the number of plant closures in North America to the growth in the BRIC countries, specifically China,” said Michelle Hill, a vice president in Oliver Wyman’s automotive group. “These plant visits provide our team a front-row seat to a company’s overall manufacturing direction and cultural environment, and we are forever thankful to those plants that share their stories with us.”

“No automotive plant today looks or operates the same as it did in 2000 or even 2010. Every plant is competing for new investments, technologies, and products, not only within their own regions, but globally, and must cultivate an environment that supports and embraces...
continuous improvement,” said Jim Schmidt, a vice president in Oliver Wyman’s automotive group.

Cooperative benchmarking is more important than ever in today’s competitive environment and provides the path and tools necessary to understand how to match the performance of the best-in-class companies. Oliver Wyman is dedicated to working closely with clients to provide the most comprehensive and significant benchmarking tool with the Harbour Report, while utilizing deep industry expertise and specialized capabilities to serve the needs of the automotive industry.

About The Harbour Report™
The Harbour Report™ is an authoritative guide to automotive manufacturing globally and a leading competitive analysis tool used by original equipment manufacturers and suppliers to benchmark performance, develop strategies, and improve operations. Oliver Wyman publishes the annual, industry-standard Report on automaker’s manufacturing productivity.

About Oliver Wyman
Oliver Wyman is a global leader in management consulting. With offices in 50+ cities across 25 countries, Oliver Wyman combines deep industry knowledge with specialized expertise in strategy, operations, risk management, and organization transformation. The firm’s 3,000 professional’s help clients optimize their business, improve their operations and risk profile, and accelerate their organizational performance to seize the most attractive opportunities. Oliver Wyman is a wholly owned subsidiary of Marsh & McLennan Companies [NYSE: MMC]. For more information, visit www.oliverwyman.com. Follow Oliver Wyman on Twitter @OliverWyman.

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