

# AutoCommuniqué

AutoCom Associates – Driving Your Communications

## Upcoming Industry Events

### **Car Management Briefing Seminars (also virtual)**

Acme, MI  
August 4 5, 2021

**NY Auto Show**  
New York, NY  
August 20 29, 2021

**IAA MOBILITY**  
Munich, Germany  
September 7 12, 2021

**The Battery Show 2021**  
Novi, MI  
September 14 16, 2021

**Automechanika Frankfurt**  
Frankfurt, Germany  
September 14 16, 2021

**Motor Bella**  
Detroit, MI  
September 21 26, 2021

**SAE Global Leadership Conference**  
Greenbrier, WV  
October 7 10, 2021

**The Assembly Show**  
Rosemont, IL  
October 26 28, 2021

**SAE Brake Colloquium**  
Orlando, FL  
October 17 20, 2021

**AAPEX**  
Las Vegas, NV  
November 2 4, 2021

**SEMA**  
Las Vegas, NV  
November 2 5, 2021

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## **ALCANTARA ON CENTER STAGE AT AUTO SHANGHAI 2021**

### **ALCANTARA**

SHANGHAI — SAIC Motor's Roewe brand, Great Wall Motor, Peugeot, Zhiji Motor, Hongqi, BMW and other car makers featured Alcantara, the "Made In Italy" luxury material, on vehicle interiors on display at the recent Shanghai Auto Show (April 21 28, 2021).

SAIC's Roewe group chose a special green edition of Alcantara® for its new ER6. Roewe's "new energy" models shared the brand's "Smart Design" closed front grille motif. The driving range for Roewe's pure electric model is expected to be 375 miles (605 km).



**SAIC Roewe ER6**

WEY, Great Wall Motor's next generation smart motor series, launched presale for its flagship model, the Mocha Hybrid CUV, with a premier showing of its "Coffee Intelligence" vehicles at the Shanghai show.

WEY's Mocha Hybrid CUV at the show featured a highly textured interior with dark Alcantara material covering seats and door panels to emphasize the vehicle's premium quality. Underhood, a 2.0 liter gasoline engine and 9 speed DCT gearbox are combined with an electric motor.

Peugeot selected Alcantara seating in shades of gray for its e 2008 SUV at the Shanghai show to reflect the battery electric vehicle's exterior treatment.

Making its debut for Zhiji Motor, a joint venture between SAIAC and Alibaba, was the IM L7. The vehicle features a clean, highly technical design and was shown with light colored Alcantara material lining its interior.

Hongqi also debuted several new models at Auto Shanghai 2021, including the Hongqi H9+ Magnolia themed Customized Version that featured interiors wrapped in blue and white Alcantara material with white embroidered magnolias decorating door panels and headliner.

In addition, BMW officially unveiled a special edition of the BMW 7 Series showcasing a new interior design with Alcantara on the headliner, door pillars and sun visors.

## INFICON DEVELOPS NEW HANDHELD HYDROGEN LEAK DETECTION PROBE



**DETROIT** — INFICON, a specialist in the development of leak detection technology for the auto industry, recently introduced a new handheld probe equipped with a hydrogen sensor that will be lighter, faster and easier to use than models currently available.

The new Strix™ sensor and hand probe are ideally suited for leak testing a wide range of automotive systems and components, including engine assemblies, air conditioning systems, battery cases, brake lines and fuel systems.

Thomas Parker, INFICON's North American automotive sales manager, notes that Strix is 30 percent lighter than the company's P60 hand probe. The tip of the Strix probe also is 12.5 percent smaller for easier access to hard to reach checkpoints.

Strix systems are faster and more accurate as well. Complex algorithms designed for Strix by INFICON development engineers in Sweden shorten measurement times, improve accuracy and speed recovery times when compared to similar handheld systems.

The Strix sensor has an expected lifetime of one year or more, reducing overall ownership costs and downtime for replacement when compared to sensors that need replacement three to four times a year.

Connected to an INFICON Sentrac Hydrogen Leak Detector, Sentrac Strix systems use a non flammable mixture of hydrogen and nitrogen as a tracer gas to find leaks. Hydrogen is readily available in most countries at a much lower cost than helium based tracer gas.



**Leak testing soldered oil cooler connections**

## THE FREUDENBERG GROUP REPORTS SOLID RESULTS FOR 2020



**PLYMOUTH, MI** — The Freudenberg Group reported sales of \$10.1 billion (€8.84 billion) globally and \$2.58 billion (€2.25 billion) in North America for its 2020 financial year. Freudenberg also continued to invest in both manufacturing and R&D facilities in North America, spending \$72.7 million (€63.4 million) spread out across different business groups in the region.

“The pandemic has made the last 12 months extraordinarily demanding and challenging,” said Dr. Mohsen Sohi, CEO of the Freudenberg Group, adding that, “so far we have managed the crisis comparatively well.”

The Group’s global sales in the 2020 financial year were below the previous year’s total of \$10.6 billion (€9.46 billion). The company reported a profit from operations of \$768.4 million (€669.9 million) compared to \$940.5 million (€820 million) the year before. At \$1.31 billion (€1.14 billion), cash flow was significantly above the comparable figure of \$1.1 billion (€956.9 million) for 2019. In North America, sales declined from \$2.84 billion (€2.54 billion) to \$2.58 billion (€2.25 billion) and employment decreased by roughly 300 from 10,562 to 10,241.

Despite the effects of the pandemic, the international rating agency Moody’s Deutschland GmbH confirmed its credit rating of Freudenberg SE as A3, with a stable outlook, as in the previous year. The Group, therefore, continues to hold an excellent single A rating.

Rapid and disciplined implementation of targeted measures by Freudenberg’s global workforce and the improvement of the economic environment in the fourth quarter were the main contributors to the relatively good 2020 results.

## NEW HIGH TECH AUTOMOTIVE DEVELOPMENT CENTER OPENS IN ISRAEL



**TEL AVIV** — A new mobility proving ground and development center is opening this year in Israel to accelerate the growth of startup companies working on smart mobility and other next generation automotive technologies.

Founded by Drive TLV, POWER by Drive includes a 20,000 square foot proving ground and a headquarters facility with meeting rooms, offices and laboratories for use by high tech startups and interested corporate partners.

The center officially opened in June for testing, technology validation and collaboration by startups and corporate partners including Honda, Volvo Cars, Volvo Group, Denso, Novelis, Ituran, NEC, Hertz, Cox Automotive, Next Gear Ventures and Israel's Mayer Cars and Trucks Group.



**POWER proving ground specialists run tests at Drive's new development center.**

POWER Manager Eyal Rabin notes that the test track can be set up with traffic lights, roundabouts, street signs and other features to simulate a wide variety of traffic situations. The secure geo fenced facility guarantees user privacy and protects the confidential nature of technology under development.

“POWER by Drive is a logical next step in the commercialization process that includes our FastLane program,” says Dr. Tal Cohen, Drive TLV's co founder. FastLane is a unique program designed to match top high tech startups with major corporate players in the mobility market. Startups that have participated in the program have raised more than \$1 billion in the past four years.

## THE LITIGATION WAR ROOM DEBUTS WITH NORMAN LIPPITT PODCAST

**LIPPITT O'KEEFE, PLLC**

**BIRMINGHAM, MICH.** — The debut edition of The Litigation War Room, a podcast series showcasing the nation's top

courtroom lawyers, features an interview with Norman Lippitt, author of *In the Trenches, Guerrilla Warfare and Other Trial Tactics*.

A former prosecuting attorney, criminal defense lawyer and Oakland County Circuit Court judge, Lippitt is co founder of the Birmingham law firm of Lippitt O'Keefe, PLLC.

With podcast host Max Goss, he discusses some of his landmark court trials including the infamous Algiers Motel case, a multi million dollar palimony dispute and litigation involving Matty Moroun, Geoffrey Fieger and Michigan mall owner Jay Kogan.

The inaugural 30 minute podcast also recaps many of the battle tested courtroom strategies covered in Lippitt's best selling book.

“Most litigators are not trial lawyers,” Lippitt notes in his book. “Trial lawyers are samurai warriors in the truest sense of the word, fighting fearlessly for their clients. They are true to their craft and remain students of it.”

He points out that many companies and individuals mistakenly choose litigators to handle their courtroom battles although far too many litigators lack the experience to prevail before a jury, especially against an experienced trial lawyer.



**Norman L. Lippitt**

## UVEYE SECURES STRATEGIC INVESTMENT FROM HYUNDAI MOTOR COMPANY



**TEL AVIV** — UVeye, a developer of automated vehicle inspection systems, has secured strategic investments from Hyundai Motor Company and several other investors to accelerate the company's global expansion plans.

UVeye has raised more than \$40 million from carmakers and other strategic investors such as W. R. Berkley Corporation since it was founded four years ago.

Hyundai's investment is part of an ongoing plan to make use of UVeye's products and platforms at various locations across Hyundai's operations globally.

"We are especially proud to be partnering with Hyundai Motor Company and to be working together with them on exciting projects around the world that enable quick and efficient inspection of vehicles using deep learning and computer vision," said Amir Hever, CEO and co founder of UVeye.



Additional investment details were not released by UVeye due to confidentiality agreements with the company's investors.

UVeye systems utilize a unique combination of proprietary algorithms, cloud architecture, artificial intelligence, machine learning and sensor fusion technologies to help standardize and speed up most previously manual inspection processes.

"Our automated, contact free systems are dramatically changing how auto dealers, major fleet operators and used vehicle auctions inspect vehicles," Hever noted.

## LABORATORIES AT GAGE PRODUCTS ARE RECOGNIZED FOR QUALITY



**FERNDALE, MICH.** — The Gage Products fuel and quality control laboratories in Ferndale, Michigan, in May announced international ISO 17025:2017 accreditation – a global standard for laboratory performance.

Gage is the only supplier of high performance paint solvents in the world to hold ISO 17025:2017 accreditation.

"International third party ISO 17025:2017 accreditation guarantees that tests are done properly by trained, highly qualified professionals," said Bob Patzelt, Gage's director of laboratories. "It further assures our partners and customers that we are using the very best processes and practices available. Accreditation also will help support our plans for expansion in Europe, the Asia Pacific region and the Americas."

Gage's quality control laboratory is housed in a multi million dollar, 5,000 square foot Innovation Center in Ferndale. The lab employs 17 technicians and scientists and is equipped with state of the art equipment that includes mass spectrometers and gas chromatographs.

The company also recently invested \$2.5 million in its Octane Testing Lab to support its production of custom fuel blends and calibration fluids for the auto industry.



**Quality control manager technician at the Gage Innovation Center**

## BETTER QUALITY CONTROL TESTING NEEDED FOR EV BATTERIES



**DETROIT** – Improved leak detection tests are needed for lithium ion batteries used in electric and hybrid electric vehicles currently on the road today, according to researchers at INFICON, a leading supplier of automotive leak detection systems.

Recent tests conducted by INFICON show that tracer gas leak tests are significantly better than current methods in use for checking battery packs and components for water ingress. INFICON has proven that to prevent water ingress, tests are needed for leak rates that cannot be found reliably with air tests. Tracer gas tests, for example, can detect leaks that are 1,000 times smaller than currently used air tests.

Closer scrutiny of electric vehicle (EV) battery components during production is needed to ensure that safety, performance and quality levels are maintained throughout the life of each battery, according to Dr. Daniel Wetzig, head of leak detection research and development at INFICON.

“Today’s pressure decay methods are either too slow or unreliable and allow significant leaks to go unnoticed,” Wetzig says.

He points out that even tiny leaks can dramatically shorten battery life, negatively impact performance and increase warranty costs. Severe cases can short circuit the electrical system or even cause fires.

EV battery packs are expected to meet the International Electrotechnical Commission’s IP67 standard (or the European EN 60529 equivalent), which require that components are capable of being immersed in one meter of water for 30 minutes without suffering any “harmful quantity” of water ingress or negative effect on performance. In practice, however, alternative test methods are used because water bath testing is too time consuming and can damage the battery.

## ALCANTARA OFFERED ON NEW VOLONIC VALET 3 CHARGING STATION



**MILAN** — Volonic is offering a selection of Alcantara luxury materials for the charging surface of its new Volonic 3, the world’s first customizable, position free wireless charger.

Unlike traditional wireless chargers that require devices to be precisely aligned on a small hotspot, the Volonic Valet 3 features FreePower™ technology that allows for corner to corner full surface charging.

As devices are placed across the Valet 3’s surface, power is delivered and intelligently managed to optimize performance. The new charger also is one of the first wireless charging solutions to offer software updates.

A signature Volonic brand offering, the Valet 3 is available for customization at [www.volonic.com](http://www.volonic.com) with a choice of four Alcantara® surface colors – light blue, red, gray and black. A “Made in Italy” luxury material that has been certified as “Carbon Neutral” since 2009, Alcantara’s soft touch and durability also are a perfect match for Volonic’s fusion of technology and fashion.

Alcantara’s combination of aesthetics, touch, grip and functionality have made it a material of choice for designers from a wide variety of sectors, including consumer electronics, fashion, interior design and automotive.



## JANA HOCHBOHM AWARDED INTERNSHIP AT AUTOCOM ASSOCIATES

**BLOOMFIELD HILLS, MICH.**– Jana Hochbohm has been awarded a twelve month internship as an account assistant at AutoCom Associates, a Michigan based public relations agency providing communications support and counsel to businesses in the global automotive industry.

Hochbohm will assist agency clients with editorial services, event planning and media relations in addition to serving as co editor of the firm’s quarterly newsletter – AutoCommunique.

A graduate of Leipzig University, Germany with a bachelor's degree in American Studies, she has a strong background in the methodologies required for successfully analyzing and synthesizing international relations. Her minor in Media and Communication Science has additionally prepared her for work in journalism, media management and marketing.



**Jana Hochbohm**

Hochbohm has already been able to apply her college knowledge in an internship at iGraal in Paris, France, where her main tasks included negotiations with affiliate partners and the set up of online marketing campaigns.

## SAVE THE DATES



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