



## » APPLICATION BULLETIN

# SOFT-TOUCH GRIPS HIT THE COMFORT ZONE

## SUNDAY AFTERNOONS JUST GOT MORE ENJOYABLE.

Whether we're preparing a special meal for the family or relaxing in front of the TV, the time we spend at home is time we cherish. It follows, then, that indoor household products designed to make that time more enjoyable tend to grab market share. Adding a comfortable grip to these products is one way to provide this kind of valuable differentiation in any competitive space. Consider combining comfort with color and performance properties using enhanced soft touch GLS™ TPE materials for even better results.

Our thermoplastic elastomers (TPEs) are designed to suit both consumer desires and product needs, including softness, vivid color or extreme clarity, and robust physical properties. In addition to their use in standalone applications, TPEs can be overmolded onto a rigid plastic grip in an injection molding process to create a distinctive, cushioned feel without compromising the stiffness and strength of the underlying structure.

When overmolded, GLS TPEs bond permanently and seamlessly to many different plastic substrates, including polypropylene (PP), polycarbonate (PC), acrylonitrile-butadiene-styrene (ABS), PC/ABS, copolyester, polyamide (nylon) and polystyrene (PS). Adding a TPE is an economical way to make an ordinary product stand out and create value for consumers. A few grams of a TPE material can often make a major difference in the perceived quality of an item.



## TPE—THE TOUGH SOFTIE

As consumers, we want products that are dishwasher safe, resistant to chemicals and are able to stand up to everyday wear and tear. Grips made with TPEs not only deliver these qualities, but they also expand the design flexibility you need to add these marketable, value-added features to your products. Consumer products that use a TPE grip have been used extensively to provide ergonomic benefits, particularly for usability and safety. For example, overmolding a TPE grip onto a hand mixer can improve comfort. Or overmolding a TPE grip to hair styling products can contribute to an anti-slip surface, even when the product handle is wet.

A few of the options you can add with GLS TPEs:

- 1. SURFACE FEEL:** TPEs can be customized to provide surface feels ranging from grippy or tacky to smooth and silky.
- 2. TEXTURE:** A wide range of textures can add sensory interest to a product. TPEs can provide unusual texturing, such as a bubble or ridged surface or even a leather look.
- 3. COLOR:** TPEs can be customized with bright colors and special effects such as glimmers, sparkles and pearlescents, as well as shine levels such as eye-catching high gloss, which conveys a high-tech, high-fashion aesthetic.

## GET A GRIP AND ADD VALUE

Today, even the most basic consumer products are being personalized and reimagined to target every demographic. TPEs play an important role in this evolution by enabling designers to add ergonomic grips in appealing textures and colors. Consider the common toothbrush. Consumers can choose from

multiple styles, many featuring soft-grip handles with special textures and bold colors to meet their individual preferences. These enhanced products are typically priced higher than standard designs. In a big box store visit, the following price differential between these common household items was observed:

## PRICE COMPARISON OF CONSUMER GOODS WITH & WITHOUT TPES

Product	With TPE	Without TPE	% Change
<b>Tape Measure</b>	\$10.88	\$6.97	56
<b>Ice Cream Scoop</b>	\$5.97	\$3.97	50
<b>Toothbrush</b>	\$1.99	\$0.99	101
<b>Utility Brush</b>	\$2.49	\$1.49	67
<b>Shaving Razor</b>	\$6.99	\$0.49	1,327
<b>Mechanical Pencil</b>	\$1.33	\$0.33	303
<b>Cork Screw</b>	\$19.99	\$8.76	128
<b>Measuring Cups</b>	\$19.99	\$12.97	54

Every day, consumers see and choose among competing products found side-by-side on store shelves. Research has shown that adding sensory enhancement and aesthetics to these products can attract buyers and can also justify a higher price point. Adding a soft-touch grip to a household product is a practical and cost-effective way for designers to create the sensory experience and perception of higher quality that consumers crave.

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