



Press review Pollen AM

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Viva Technology: Seb wants to transform its after-sales service with 3D printing

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During the Viva Technolog conference, which will be held until tomorrow at Porte de Versailles in Paris, the specialist in small household appliances announced their ambitions in 3D printing. From next year, the French group plans to print more than 20,000 spare parts. To accelerate in this area, Seb collaborates in particular with the start-up Pollen AM.

How to replace a defective part of a product that is no longer manufactured? To respond to this kind of problem, the SEB group turned to additive manufacturing techniques. At the Viva Technology conference, which takes place from June 30 to July 2 in Paris, Alain Pautrot, director of consumer satisfaction at Seb, explained how 3D printing could extend the lifespan of products.

Print more than 20,000 pieces as of 2017

The French giant of small household appliances is currently testing 3D printing techniques on 40 references. "The goal is to give them to consumers who repair products on their own. We then contact them every two weeks to find out how the play is progressing," says Alain Pautrot. This first step therefore consists in recovering consumer "feedbacks" to qualify the parts more quickly. "This qualification phase should last 8 to 9 months. We plan to print 1,500 pieces over this period", explains Alain Pautrot.

In parallel with this qualification phase, a sociological study is being carried out with Ademe in order to collect consumer perception. "We want to know if the consumer agrees to have a part with a slightly different rendering in order to keep his product" explains Alain Pautrot.

Once the parts have been qualified, they can be shipped worldwide to any consumer. On the forecast side, Seb expected to print 20,000 pieces next year. "But by working, among others, with Pollen AM, we imagine going much faster," says Alain Pautrot.

Increase customer satisfaction and reduce inventory size

Co-founded two years ago by Cédric Michel, the start-up Pollen AM has developed a 3D printer, called PAM, compatible with all thermoplastics. Unlike other machines on the market, PAM works with granules of thermoplastics or microbeads of conventional industrial resins and composites and not with powder or filaments. What significantly reduce printing costs. PAM also allows you to print objects with up to four different materials.

For the time being, a team of five people at Seb is working on the use of 3D printing for the production of spare parts. Three new employees have just joined the team, including a materials engineer. "We believe that the material is at the heart of evolution and we also want to establish a research partnership with Pollen AM on the materials of the future," said Alain Pautrot.

On the questions concerning the economic interest of such a service which lengthens the life of the products, he replies that 3D printing of spare parts is not a service in itself, but a brick among others to increase customer satisfaction. In the longer term, the use of 3D printing to make spare parts on demand would also significantly reduce the size of stocks by storing software, rather than physical products.