

Gill Industries Launches Headrest Mechanism that Lowers Cost, 10X Quicker to Retool

New folding headrest weighs less and is thinner than competing products

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich., April 3 -- Gill Industries Inc. has developed a folding headrest mechanism for 2nd and 3rd row seats of SUVs, minivans, and [crossover vehicles](#) that is 10 times quicker to place into production than competing products and can save up to \$650,000 in retooling and associated costs.

"It usually takes from six to nine months for us to retool a line to produce a new headrest system," said Brad Miller, director of advanced product development for Gill Industries. "With our new platform folding headrest, we can cut that time to six to nine days." The Grand Rapids, Mich.-based supplier of stamped metal components, welded assemblies and mechanisms sells products to leading automakers and Tier 1 auto suppliers, such as Johnson Controls, Continental Teves, Intier, Lear Corporation and Bosch.

Miller said the system saves customers a considerable amount of money in two ways: retooling costs and engineering and design costs. The new headrest system largely eliminates the need for Tier 1 suppliers and the OEMs to pay for new tooling of production lines at Gill Industries, which can cost up to \$400,000 for a program. At the same time, the versatility of the headrest platform reduces the need for engineering/design changes and testing that can add up to \$250,000 per program.

The patent-pending headrest mechanism weighs 0.5 kilograms (about 1.2 pounds) less than competing products, which is a significant reduction in weight when a vehicle carrying as many as five mechanisms is subjected to a 30 mile-per-hour [crash test](#). Miller said the new mechanism is designed to meet the Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard 202a requirements.

The headrest mechanism is also thinner than competing products so it can be installed in a wider variety of automotive seats, and a version of the system can be activated remotely by the driver to flip headrests down for clearer vision through the rear window.

Miller said the Gill team of engineers and designers were able to reduce weight, yet maintain strength, through the use of engineered materials, component reduction and design for manufacturing.

"Our team at the Gill Technology Center spent almost an entire year developing this advancement in automotive technology," Gill Industries President and Chief Operating Officer Richard Perreault said. "We are confident we have a product that is well worth the investment we made in time and money. This new headrest mechanism is the type of innovation that the automotive industry has come to expect of our company."

Founded in 1964, Gill Industries has sales, design and manufacturing locations in Grand Rapids, Trenton, Ga. and Naucalpan, Mexico, as well as a sales office in Hellendoorn, the Netherlands. Certified as a TS16949 company and a Women's Business Enterprise, the company sells components, mechanisms and systems for the automotive, office furniture and utility vehicle industries.