Shapeline: customized light signatures for RVs

Words Giorgio Carpi

Matthias Schwabe, Head of Product Management for Signal Lighting at HELLA, talks about the modular Shapeline lamp product family

It's all about looks, at least when it comes to vehicle design. Headlamps and rear combination lamps highlight a vehicle's design and become a distinctive feature of the manufacturer's vehicle when it's on the road. In an interview, Matthias Schwabe, Head of Product Management for Signal Lighting at lighting and electronics specialist HELLA, talks about how the modular Shapeline lamp product family supports this and explains how low-volume manufacturers can create customized light signatures in no time at all.

Aboutcamp BtoB: Mr. Schwabe, how did you come up with the name "Shapeline"?
Matthias Schwabe: Shapeline was the name given to our innovative modular lamp product family. In line with our "think modular" motto, RV and motorhome manufacturers can use our modular lighting systems to make their vehicles look truly unique.

Aboutcamp BtoB: What makes these systems so appealing to RV and motorhome manufacturers?
Matthias Schwabe: At the moment, there are many manufacturers that produce in small production lots, yet still want an attractive design. However, to develop such lighting systems often requires enormous time and expense. This is precisely where Shapeline comes in.

Aboutcamp BtoB: What lamps does the product family include?
Matthias Schwabe: The product family includes various single and multi-purpose lamps for front, side and rear lighting in the most diverse shapes and sizes. These also include various lighting functions – from reversing lights and rear fog lights, side marker

and clearance lamps to positioning and daytime running lights. And we are continuously working on further lighting functions. Lastly, design elements without lighting functions are also available. All lamps come in two designs – in the traditional and straight-lined "Tech Design" as well as in the dynamic, curved "Style Design."

Aboutcamp BtoB: Can manufacturers combine the lamps among one another?
Matthias Schwabe: Yes, the modular product family allows the lamps to be combined in virtually any conceivable configuration. Here, too, we are constantly working on expanding the combination options. Depending on the relevant lighting function, the lamps come with red, white or yellow cover lenses. The modules are designed symmetrically. This means they can be mounted either on the right or left side of a vehicle and they can also be turned 180°. A slight incline is also possible in order to give the vehicle a particularly dynamic look. All of this is already taken into account in the homologation and does not involve additional costs. Not only that, vehicle manufacturers can immediately test out all configuration options using our online configurator.

Aboutcamp BtoB: What exactly is the purpose of the online configurator?
Matthias Schwabe: The configurator helps manufacturers create the light signatures for their vehicle. The first step involves selecting a vehicle silhouette. Users can then individually place the different lighting modules on the vehicle via drag and drop. In the last step, users can then download the finished configuration as a PDF file or send a direct system request to the HELLA customer service center. The online configurator temporarily turns its users into designers.

Aboutcamp BtoB: In addition to the customized design feature, what are some other benefits of Shapeline?
Matthias Schwabe: Manufacturers can rely on the high quality of the Shapeline products in which HELLA has invested its expertise, expertise that comes primarily from its role as OEM for automakers. This means, for example, that product design is technologically optimized in every regard. For both variants, micro-optics on the interior and exterior lens provide for a homogeneous appearance when turned on and off. Moreover, Shapeline is based on standard components. This, in turn, enables us to ensure the same high quality as for high-volume production. Another benefit for manufacturers is the fact that they have to estimate only the part price; there are no investment costs as there are with customer-specific lamps. Additionally, all modules are suitable both for 12 V as well as for 24 V systems. Yet another decisive plus point: all lamps are based on the newest LED technology.

Aboutcamp BtoB: Why should manufacturers opt for LED technology?
Matthias Schwabe: There are a number of reasons that speak in favor of LED technology. In contrast to halogen lights, LEDs are more energy efficient which makes them considerably less expensive. On top of that, LED lamps have a much higher service life and are almost maintenance free.

Aboutcamp BtoB: Now we come to the legal requirements. Are these taken into account in Shapeline?
Matthias Schwabe: Depending on the lighting function, the Shapeline product family is SAE and/or ECE approved. This is also taken into account in the online configurator. Before selecting a design, manufacturers first have to decide which requirements are in effect for their vehicles. Furthermore, they comply with the IP6K7 and IPX9K protection classes and are therefore pressure-washing-resistant and dust-proof. The Shapeline modules can be used in almost any conventional vehicle environment.

Aboutcamp BtoB: Even when the online configurator offers outstanding assistance. To what extent does HELLA ensure that the design is correctly created and realized?
Matthias Schwabe: If requested, we support our customers throughout the entire process – from the design of the lighting concept to testing whether it complies with ECE or SAE regulations.

Aboutcamp BtoB: Finally, how are the lighting systems integrated in the vehicle?
Matthias Schwabe: Depending on the function of the lights, there are three different mounting options: adhesion, screwing and snap-shut ball pin mounting. Shapeline thus covers all conventional methods and offers manufacturers maximum flexibility. In this, too, we support our customers from start to finish.

Technical data

SHAPELINE DESIGN YOUR LIGHT

Functions include position light, reflex reflector, direction indicator, side marker light, clearance light, tail-stop light, tail-stop-direction indicator, backup light, rear fog light and warning light.

Operating temperature	- 40 °C to + 60 °C
Reverse polarity protection	Present
Operating voltage	Multi-volt 9 – 32 V
Type approval	ECE / SAE
EMC class	5
Protection class	IP 6K9K
Integrated short-circuit protection	available

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