

ISSUE 2

STRETCH

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Malaysian Rubber Export Promotion Council

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Malaysia's *Largest* Nitrile

Glove Manufacturer



Hartalega

In times of global infectious disease outbreak, there is usually an upsurge in demand for medical gloves. The situation with the current influenza A (H1N1) pandemic is no different.

The Malaysian glove industry caters for 60% to 65% of the world's natural rubber (NR) glove market and also supplies about half of the world's nitrile gloves. Since 2008, Malaysia is not only the world's No. 1 exporter of NR gloves, but has also become the world's No. 1 exporter of nitrile gloves.

*To respond to the current global trend where the uptake of medical gloves is increasing, MREPC is putting in place promotional activities that will send a message to the world to look at Malaysia for quality rubber gloves, be it NR or nitrile. We hope to make buyers worldwide **Think Malaysia First** when they are sourcing for quality rubber gloves. Malaysian manufacturers have been quick to respond to changing requirements, such as the shift in demand from NR to nitrile gloves in some countries, particularly the United States. While NR gloves are still the gloves of choice for most export destinations, there is also a growing demand for nitrile gloves. In addition, local glove manufacturers will also have to focus their attention on growing markets such as China, India, Russia, the Middle East and Latin America. In China alone, there are more than 75,000 healthcare facilities, and MREPC has appointed a representative to lay the foundation for linking up with potential distributors, buyers and government agencies to increase its presence in China.*

With another nitrile latex producer coming onstream in the country and providing the raw material at our doorstep, the production of nitrile gloves will be on the increase. The demand for NR gloves will nevertheless still be there. While the OEM market forms the bulk of most export of rubber gloves, it may be prudent in the long term to develop our own brands, including the national brand, SMG. The SMG represents a major marketing strategy to distinguish Malaysian gloves from those of other producers. In this respect, MREPC has mounted a three-year SMG blitz to create a greater awareness of the merits of this product and to convince consumers that it should be the medical examination glove of choice.



CEO of MREPC Dato' Teo Suat Cheng

CONTENTS

From the CEO's Desk	2
Trade Fairs/Exhibitions	3
MREPC's Press Release in USA	6
Industry	7
Trade Statistics	9
Glove Manufacturer with Many Industry Firsts	10
MATRADE Revised Market Development Grant (MDG)	13
Seminars/Workshops	14
Commentary	18

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Automechanika Malaysia 2009, Kuala Lumpur

[25–28 March 2009]

Automechanika Malaysia was held for the first time in Malaysia and was supported by MATRADE. The exhibition showcased a wide range of auto parts such as engine parts, repair and maintenance products, auto accessories, car safety and other automotive-related products.

A total of 112 exhibitors participated in this show, with Malaysian companies taking up 30% of the booths. The show attracted participants from China, Taiwan, Korea, Germany and other countries. MREPC had the opportunity to meet with representatives from a number of reputable companies during the show, including Delphi Corporations, SAE international, Mercedes-Benz, Proton and others.

Automechanika Malaysia provided an opportunity for local manufacturers to introduce their products with a view of attracting new international buyers.



MREPC's booth at Automechanika Malaysia

Arab Health, Dubai

[26–29 January 2009]

The Arab Health exhibition which was held from 26 to 29 January 2009 is the premier healthcare exhibition for the Middle East region. With more than 2,500 exhibitors from over 65 countries, it offers a platform to showcase healthcare products and services. Held at the Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, the show attracted more than 50,000 international visitors.

Thirteen Malaysian companies, including MREPC and three rubber product manufacturers, namely Hartalega Sdn. Bhd., Comfort Rubber Gloves Industries Sdn. Bhd. and Adventa Health Sdn. Bhd., were located at the Malaysian stand, helmed by MATRADE. Top Glove International Sdn. Bhd. and Supermax Latex Products Sdn. Bhd. also participated at Arab Health with their own stands.

Fewer rubber medical devices manufacturers from Malaysia participated this year, perhaps because the event was held during the Chinese New Year holidays. The absence of Malaysian condom manufacturers was felt, as a number of enquiries were received for this product.

MREPC displayed a variety of rubber medical products including gloves, condoms, catheters, breathing bags and finger cots. The MREPC corporate video was shown during the exhibition to portray MREPC as the premier trade promotion agency for rubber and rubber products.



Dr. Chew of MREPC (left) attending to visitors

MREPC received a significant number of enquiries, primarily from the United Arab Emirates and other Middle East countries. Enquiries received were largely for examination and surgical gloves, condoms, hot water bottles and catheters.

Thirteenth SEA Healthcare Show 2009, Kuala Lumpur

(1–3 April 2009)

The Southeast Asian Healthcare Show is held every two years and is organized by ABC Exhibitions Malaysia. The 13th SEA Healthcare Show was held at the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre from 1 to 3 April 2009, showcasing the latest technology and innovations in the medical industry.

The show comprised 120 exhibitors, both local and foreign, and attracted about 3,000 visitors, mostly from Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore. MREPC exhibited a wide range of rubber medical products, though most interest was centred on medical gloves, with some enquiries related to hot water bottles, catheters and condoms.

Various seminars were held concurrent to the show. MREPC organized a talk on SMG gloves, with a speaker from the Malaysian Rubber Board (MRB), which attracted about 60 attendees. MREPC also arranged a business matching session between a prospective buyer from Indonesia and local manufacturers.



Raja Sivam of MREPC (left) attending to visitors

CMEF Spring 2009, Shenzhen

(18–21 April 2009)

The 61st China International Medicinal Equipment Fair (CMEF) Spring 2009 was held at the Shenzhen Convention and Exhibition Centre in China from 18 to 21 April 2009. It has become the largest exhibition for medical equipment, related products and services in the Asia-Pacific region, with over 2,100 exhibitors from more than 20 countries, and attracting a total of 120,000 visitors.

The Malaysian rubber medical devices stand comprised MREPC and three manufacturers, namely Adventa Health, Hartalega and Takaso Rubber Products. The pavilion received a significant number of visitors, both local (Chinese) and foreign, with most interest shown on medical gloves, followed by catheters, hot water bottles, medical tubings, condoms, breathing bags, probe covers, exercise bands and finger cots.

Visitors were generally impressed with the quality of Malaysian-made products, and acknowledged that Malaysia was a leader in rubber medical gloves and other rubber products, in terms of quality and reliability.



Ms. Carol Tan of MREPC (centre) with visitors

CDS 2009, Chicago, Illinois

(26 February–1 March 2009)

MREPC participated at the Chicago Dental Society Midwinter Meeting, held in Chicago, Illinois, USA, from 26 February to 1 March 2009.

The Midwinter Dental Meeting and Expo is one of the top five best attended dental events in the United States, attracting annually about 34,000 attendees who include dental professionals, and dental product and service providers. It is the “doorway” to the world of dental networking. It provides a platform for updating attendees with the latest innovations in equipment and materials available, as well as for discussions on issues confronting the dental care industry.

More than 600 manufacturers, dealers, and suppliers participated in the 2009 show, covering a wide range of dental health care products and services.

The participation in the event by the US office was part of MREPC's efforts to promote the use of Malaysia's quality natural rubber latex and nitrile gloves, including the Standard Malaysian Gloves (SMG), among the American dental professionals and glove distributors. Responses to MREPC's promotional information were very encouraging with many showing great interest in the SMG program.

Besides MREPC, there were ten other exhibitors displaying and marketing glove products. These included one Malaysian SMG glove manufacturer, Supermax, who participated through their US office. Supermax strongly promoted SMG.



The Chicago Midwinter Dental Show



Dr. Esah Yip of MREPC (left) attending to visitors

Chicago
Dental
Society

MIDWINTER
MEETING

Published Studies Back Use of Latex Gloves in Swine Flu Kits

Malaysian Group Says

Latex is a Proven

Barrier Against

Viruses and the Only

"Green" Option

Washington, DC – May 12 – Amidst measures being taken to address the swine flu (H1N1 virus) outbreak, Operation USA and other groups are distributing precautionary kits that contain face masks and natural rubber latex gloves. There are many types of gloves on the market, but gloves made from natural rubber latex are most appropriate to guard against viral transmissions, according to peer-reviewed, published studies posted at http://www.latexglove.info/health_safety.php. Natural rubber is also a renewable resource and biodegradable – unlike synthetic rubber gloves, which are made from petroleum-derived materials.

Denise Korniewicz, PhD, RN, FAAN, Professor and Sr. Associate Dean for Research, University of Miami School of Nursing and Health Studies, is an accomplished researcher and a well-recognized authority on the barrier integrity of medical gloves. She notes that barrier protection is paramount during the current swine flu outbreak.

“Although nitrile and vinyl gloves are available for hand protection, latex gloves still provide the most effective barrier against bacteria and viruses,” said Dr. Korniewicz. “Vinyl gloves are the least effective. To date, latex gloves remain the gold standard for barrier protection for healthcare workers.”

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Medical Glove Powder Report states that there are many gloves made from materials other than latex, such as synthetic rubbers or polymers, but “none possesses the unique mix of properties found in NRL (natural rubber latex) gloves.” These properties include high tensile strength and elasticity. The latter property allows the gloves to reseal holes created from accidental needle pricks, which often happen in the health care setting.

Latex gloves are produced by countries such as Malaysia, the world's leading producer of latex and nitrile gloves. All gloves from Malaysia meet FDA requirements. Quality certified premium latex examination gloves are also available under the Standard Malaysian Glove (SMG) program. SMG gloves have controlled low protein levels and are environmentally friendly. For more information on latex gloves, please visit www.SMG-online-biz.

MREPC is a non-profit organization set up by Malaysia. One major role of MREPC is to serve as an education and information centre focusing particularly on natural rubber latex gloves to help users better understand the products they use. The organization works closely with standards setting and regulatory authorities such as the American Society for Testing and Materials (ASTM) and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and with other governmental organizations, and trade, consumer and public interest groups. For further information about latex gloves, please visit www.mrepc.com.

Quality Rubber Grommets, Dust Covers and Boots from Malaysia (Malaysian Parts for Global Automotive Industry)



The rubber automotive parts sector has developed into an important contributor to Malaysia's foreign exchange earnings, thanks to a growing demand for rubber automotive parts in developed and developing countries. Besides producing our own national vehicles, Malaysia's abundant supply of natural rubber and strong institutional support in R&D have helped the country to produce a wide range of high quality rubber automotive products.

Rubber grommets, dust covers and boots are among the largest exports of rubber automotive parts from Malaysia. Malaysia exported US\$50 million worth of these rubber automotive parts in 2008, growing at a healthy compounded average growth rate of 11% from US\$33 million in 2004 (Chart 1).

The US is the biggest market for Malaysian rubber grommets, dust covers and boots in terms of value. Thirty-four percent of these rubber automotive parts were exported to the US in 2008 (Chart 2). Another major importer of these rubber automotive parts is Japan. The ability of Malaysian manufacturers and exporters in accessing the US and Japanese markets shows the high standard and quality of Malaysian rubber grommets, dust covers and boots. China, with a growing automotive industry, is another important destination for these rubber automotive products. The imports of these rubber automotive parts into China are further enhanced through exports into Hong Kong. Australia rounded up as the fifth leading importer of Malaysian rubber grommets, dust covers and boots.

Chart 1: Malaysia's Exports of Rubber Grommets, Dust Covers and Boots (HS Code 401699990), 2004-2008

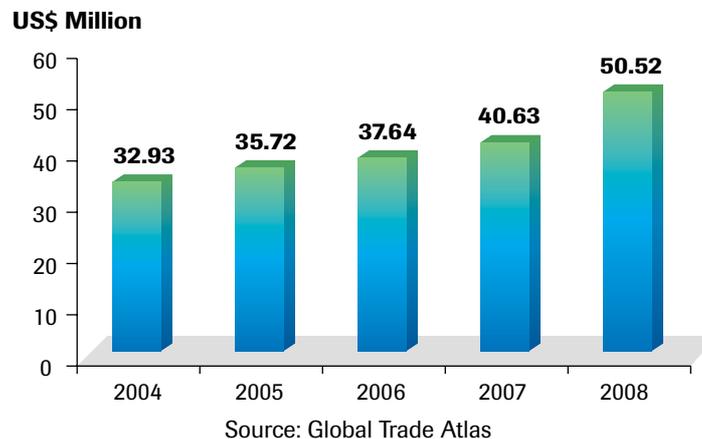
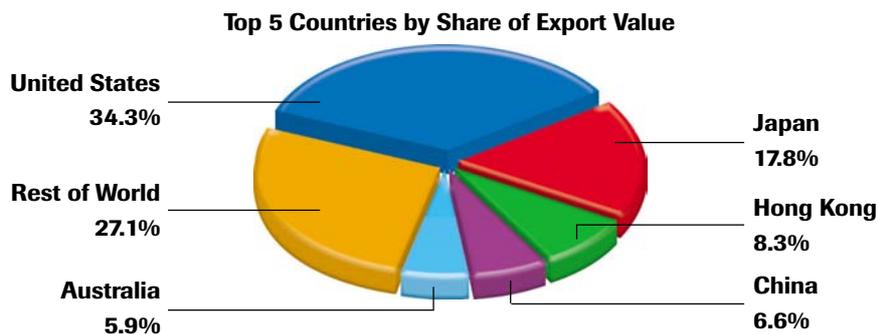


Chart 2: Malaysia's Export Destinations of Rubber Grommets, Dust Covers and Boots in 2008



To date, Malaysian-made rubber grommets, dust covers and boots have been exported to over 70 countries worldwide. If you are looking for these products and other quality rubber automotive parts, find them from our extensive list of reputable manufacturers and suppliers in our website www.mrepc.com. Alternatively, you may visit the companies' websites as listed in the following table.

Malaysian Exporters for Rubber Grommets, Dust Covers and Boots

Company	Website/Link
AE Rubber Sdn. Bhd.	www.aerubber.com
Altoraba Industries Sdn. Bhd.	www.mrepc.com/trade/company_profile.php?mrepc_no=00007
Associated First Rubber (M) Sdn. Bhd.	www.cooltecindustries.com/cooltec.htm
CKS Rubber Industries Sdn. Bhd.	www.cksrubber.com
Creative Rubber Products Sdn. Bhd.	www.creativerubber.com
CWD Rubber Products Sdn. Bhd.	www.swanrubber.com.my
Fudex Rubber Products Sdn. Bhd.	www.fudex.com.my
Gummi Metal Technik (M) Sdn. Bhd.	www.gmt.com.my
Heveaplast (M) Sdn. Bhd.	www.heveaplast.com.my
Hin Getah (M) Sdn. Bhd.	hingetah.asiaep.com
HML Auto Industries Sdn. Bhd.	www.sinmohseng.com.my
KMK Rubber Manufacturing Sdn. Bhd.	www.kmkrubber.com.my
Kossan Rubber Industries Berhad	www.kossan.com.my
Kumpulan Jebco (M) Sdn. Bhd.	www.kumpulanjebco.com
Malaysia Auto Products Sdn. Bhd.	www.map-rubber.com
Malaysian Consortium of Rubber Products	www.malcorp.com.my
Marutech Elastomer Industries Sdn. Bhd.	www.zebcycle.com
Min Industries Sdn. Bhd.	www.mrepc.com/trade/company_profile.php?mrepc_no=00208
NSR Rubber Protective Sdn. Bhd.	www.nsr-rubber.com
Pong Codan Rubber (M) Sdn. Bhd.	www.pongcodan.com
Sail Crest Industry Sdn. Bhd.	www.sail-crest.com
Sarpi Enterprise	sarpi.asiaep.com
Schmaco Auto Parts Industries Sdn. Bhd.	www.schmaco.com.my
Seginiaga Rubber Industries Sdn. Bhd.	www.seginiaga.com.my
Sim Mah Rubber Industries Sdn. Bhd.	www.simmah.com
Sinamik Engineering Sdn. Bhd.	www.sinamik.com.my
Sri Kota Rubber Manufacturing Sdn. Bhd.	www.srikota.com
Swan Rubber Products (Ipoh) Sdn. Bhd.	www.swanrubber.com.my
Taguchi K.Rubber (M) Sdn. Bhd.	www.mrepc.com/trade/company_profile.php?mrepc_no=00283
Tanju Peng Silicone Rubber Industries Sdn. Bhd.	www.jperi.com
Unika Rubber Products Sdn. Bhd.	www.mrepc.com/trade/company_profile.php?mrepc_no=00269
Watas Holdings Sdn. Bhd.	www.mrepc.com/trade/company_profile.php?mrepc_no=00254
Wesma Rubber Products Sdn. Bhd.	www.wesmarubber.com
Wong Brothers Rubber Products	www.mrepc.com/trade/company_profile.php?mrepc_no=00272
Zillion Ace (M) Sdn. Bhd.	www.zillionace.com

(Article credit: Izwan Zarik, Alice Chong, Noraishah Idris and Josephine Teh, Corporate Planning & Research Division, MREPC)

Major Destinations of Malaysia's Rubber Product Exports (RM'000)

Country	January-March 2009	January-March 2008	% Change	% Share (2009)
EU-27	777,660	919,137	-15.4	30.5
USA	725,791	660,186	9.9	28.5
ASEAN	183,907	222,516	-17.4	7.2
Japan	146,391	132,791	10.2	5.8
China, P.R.	78,926	66,514	18.7	3.1
Australia	73,305	88,272	-17.0	2.9
Hong Kong, SAR	63,747	104,078	-38.8	2.5
Canada	51,020	43,894	16.2	2.0
Brazil	38,790	86,917	-55.4	1.5
UAE	28,564	24,155	18.3	1.1
South Korea	23,254	35,606	-34.7	0.9
Turkey	20,832	25,581	-18.6	0.8
Subtotal	2,212,187	2,409,647	-8.2	86.9
World Total	2,545,569	2,742,133	-7.2	100.0

Source: Department of Statistics, Malaysia

Malaysia's Exports and Imports of Rubber Products (RM'000)

	Exports		Imports	
	2009	2008	2009	2008
January	876,425	925,775	200,291	249,324
February	795,507	882,574	164,926	192,571
March	873,637	933,783	218,471	263,838
January-March	2,545,569	2,742,133	583,688	705,733
% Change (January-March) 09/08	-7.2		-17.3	

Source: Department of Statistics, Malaysia

Hartalega

Rubber Glove Manufacturer with Many Industry Firsts



Hartalega's plant at Batang Berjuntai

“ We want to be No.1 glove manufacturer that produces the best and most innovative gloves in the world, and to be recognized as a caring company to the community and environment..... Kuan ”

One would hardly imagine that in the vicinity of Batang Berjuntai, a suburb in the Malaysian state of Selangor, may be found one of the most technologically-advanced and innovative rubber glove manufacturers in the world today – Hartalega Sdn. Bhd. Hartalega, a fully-owned subsidiary of Hartalega Holdings Berhad, was originally incorporated to develop the Kuan family's property business. But its visionary managing director, Kuan Kam Hon, had the foresight to recognize the vast potential offered by the increasing demand for medical gloves back in the 1980s, and decided to steer his company along this route, and has never looked back since.

With its four ultra-modern plants on a 10-hectare site, Hartalega is currently the second largest nitrile glove supplier in the world and the largest in Malaysia. Size, however, is not the defining feature of Hartalega; rather, it is the company's passionate belief in the use of

cutting-edge technology and innovation in its processes which sets it apart from other players in the business, a culture initiated and propagated by Kuan himself. A great believer in the use of modern technology, Kuan has great faith that with good R&D, technology and innovation, reduction in production costs will automatically follow, with concomitant improvement in productivity and quality. Says Kuan: “I love engineering. I live on engineering.” He decided early on that since he was going to produce gloves, he was going to produce consistent gloves with the best quality possible. With such a commitment, the company has evolved to be the best technology-based glove company in the world, chalking up numerous firsts in the industry. Existing technology has never been sufficient for Kuan, who believes in pushing the frontier of technological innovation and to do what no other glove maker has done. It is therefore a credit to the company and its staff that much of the

technology used is developed in-house. Many of these proprietary technologies and innovations are patent pending.

Hartalega first started operations with a single line in 1988 and grew rapidly to a complement of 33 lines currently, producing six billion pieces of gloves a year, comprising mainly examination natural rubber latex and nitrile gloves. The latter makes up to 80% of its total production. Production is running at full capacity despite the current challenging global economic situation, a testament to the resilience of the glove manufacturing sector. The company is currently adding a fifth plant, and rebuilding its oldest. With the completion of these projects, Hartalega's total capacity per annum will increase to 10.5 billion gloves in 2012. It may also become the largest nitrile glove supplier in the world, albeit this is not of the greatest priority to the company. The fundamental philosophy, as propounded by Kuan, is that it is

imperative the company develops its own technology that will trigger a chain of modernization to usher in a new era in glove-making. This philosophy has permeated through all strata of the employee ranks, resulting in a work force with the relevant skills-set for developing and maintaining such frontier-pushing technology. The presence of a strong management team provides the necessary leadership to sustain its premier position as a supplier of quality gloves.



Managing director of Hartalega, Kuan Kam Hon (right), receiving an industry award from the then Prime Minister of Malaysia

With the emphasis on R&D as being crucial in developing its in-house technology and expertise, Hartalega has achieved many significant breakthroughs and industry firsts. Among these was the development of the first polymer-coated powder-free examination glove in 1995. It was also among the first to receive the USA FDA 510K to market low-protein latex examination gloves. At present, the company is a highly-rated OEM manufacturer producing examination, surgical, laboratory, cleanroom, emergency medical service and food grade gloves, and is a major supplier to the USA. The healthcare segment accounts for up to 83% of the company's business. To enhance its R&D and shorten its development time, a dedicated process simulator has been commissioned to provide precise simulation of the glove dipping process. This piece of equipment can put every imagination to test in a timely manner, ensuring speedy delivery of a new product to customers.

Like all Malaysian glove manufacturers, the company started out producing natural rubber latex gloves. It began producing nitrile gloves in 1996, but switched to big-time nitrile production beginning in 2002, even though it was acknowledged at the time that big-scale production of nitrile gloves presented special challenges. According to Kuan, several factors prompted this decision, among which are: trading in nitrile gloves provides a natural hedge to fluctuations in the US dollar, as both purchase of nitrile latex and sale of gloves are quoted in the same currency; with constant development by suppliers, nitrile latex is deemed to deliver more predictable and consistent properties; over a period of time, it has been observed that there is lesser volatility in raw material prices vis-a-vis natural latex; and good quality nitrile gloves provide a better profit margin. With its innovation of producing gloves as light as 4.7g in 2004 and 3.7g currently, the differential between the price of nitrile and natural latex gloves is increasingly becoming narrower, making it easier for customers to switch to nitrile from natural latex.



Automatic glove stripping



Stringent quality control

Hartalega's success story has always centred on its ability to leverage on engineering, technology and innovation, and the profitability that flows from this. It is the first company to develop and implement a double-former dipping process which results in a phenomenal production rate of 30,000 pieces of gloves per hour, a rate which is at least more than two-fold the industry norm and puts it at the forefront of dipping technology, and miles ahead of its competitors. This innovation is matched by an equally impressive and necessary fully-automatic glove stripping system, which strips gloves at the prevailing dipping rate, otherwise not achievable manually. Both these technologies are unprecedented innovations in the industry. Such an unrivalled system leads to a considerable saving in labour cost, which, as with other cost-saving measures, are passed on to its loyal customers, enhancing another of Hartalega's philosophy of mutually developing the business with its customers. In addition, an auto-stacking system is also being employed, leading to further savings in labour cost.



Fully-automatic robotic R&D process simulator

One of the shortcomings of nitrile against latex glove has been the inability to match the tactility and comfort of the latter. In this respect, Hartalega has been the first glove manufacturer to commercially produce nitrile examination and surgical gloves which possess stress relaxation properties equivalent to that demonstrated by natural rubber latex gloves and emulate the 'feel' of natural latex gloves.

Innovations and technology have not only been confined to the manufacturing processes. The company is also the first in the industry to use industrial barcoding for product traceability and stock management, and the more sophisticated radio frequency identification tag (RFID) method for warehouse management. Such a method reduces errors and leads to further savings in operational costs.

The company's products consistently surpass the specifications set by national and international standards, and regulatory bodies. Its quality management system meets with all international requirements and are frequently audited and accepted by its worldwide customers.



State-of-the-art biomass energy generator

Environment, health and safety considerations are an integral part in the operations of Hartalega. It was the first in the industry to use oil palm empty fruit bunches as biomass fuel to generate heat for production processes. Its specialist-equipment biomass plant was imported from Belgium and is the only plant in the industry registered to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (Kyoto Protocol) as carbon neutral and environment friendly.

Hartalega was listed on Bursa Malaysia in April 2008. The company exports to 23 countries across five continents, with the bulk of the shipments going to USA. Its profits have made it one of the star performers within the glove sector in Malaysia.

For more information on Hartalega and its products, visit its website at www.hartalega.com.my

In view of the current economic situation, MATRADE recently reviewed its Market Development Grant (MDG), a 50% reimbursable grant scheme. Certain features of the existing incentives were strengthened (changes in bold) and a new incentive for follow-up business meetings has been introduced. The details of the reimbursable expenses are as follows:

Participation in International Trade Fairs

- Participation fee

- **Economy class airfare for two persons**

- **Two hotel rooms not exceeding RM200 per night for local international trade fairs and RM1,000 per night for overseas fairs.** Payment will cover the duration of the event and two days before or after the event

- Rental of standard booth which is limited to :
 - 18 sq. m for small products
 - 36 sq. m for big items like furniture and machinery equipment
 - 72 sq. m for furniture items (only for local international trade fair)

- **Construction and enhancement of standard booth or shared cost of construction on group basis**

- Interpreter services for non-English speaking countries, with a maximum cost of RM1,000 for the duration of the international trade fair

- Shipment of exhibits and promotional materials. For local international trade fair, sending of samples and promotional materials is subject to a maximum cost of RM2,000

- Standard advertisement in trade fair show directory. **For local international trade fair is subject to maximum cost of RM1,000**

Follow-up Business Meeting within 6 months after participation in Trade and Investment Mission, Specialized Marketing Mission and International Trade Fair organized by MATRADE & MITI Agencies

- Economy class airfare for two persons

- Two hotel rooms for a maximum duration of 3 days 2 nights and subject to a maximum room rate at RM1,000 per night (*3 days 2 nights per city*)

Printing of Promotional Materials

Companies are eligible for a maximum grant of RM100,000 for the production of promotional materials such as brochures, banners, advertisements in magazines or product directory, and CD/DVD.

Apart from the above, there is a whole range of other incentives provided by MATRADE. For comprehensive information of MDG Application and Claim Procedures for all these incentives, please visit:

http://www.matrade.gov.my/cms/content.jsp?id=com.tms.cms.section.Section_53f91a74-7f000010-452a452a-e00ad78d

Your new markets.
Our old friends.



As one of the few truly global players in the trade fair sector, we have access to an extensive international network. Messe Frankfurt's industry platforms offer you the possibility to present your innovations, forge valuable contacts and check out the latest trends in the market. As your professional partner, we open doors for you. Worldwide.

→ www.messefrankfurt.com

we make markets. worldwide.

Moving up the Value Chain in Medical Devices: An Irish Experience

(24 March 2009)

MREPC, in collaboration with Enterprise Ireland, organized a briefing on 'Moving up the Value Chain in Medical Devices: An Irish Experience' on 24 March 2009. A total of 14 representatives from 10 companies participated in the event.



Mr. Garvey addressing the audience

The two speakers for the briefing were Mr. Michael Garvey, Director ASEAN, Enterprise Ireland and Mr. John Ward, Managing Director of SteriPack Asia Sdn. Bhd.

The topics presented by the speakers were 'Developments and Growth of Medical Devices Industry in Ireland' and 'An Irish Medical Device Company in Malaysia: SteriPack Asia Sdn. Bhd.'

Mr. Garvey's topic covered Ireland's economy, development of the medical devices industry in Ireland and government initiatives to encourage the development of the life sciences sector which included examples of development of specific technologies and products.

In his presentation, Mr. Ward shared SteriPack Group's experiences about its successful journey into medical packaging and contract services for the medical devices industry. He also related his experience in establishing SteriPack Malaysia.



Mr. Ward sharing his experience

Mr. Ward mentioned that countries like Ireland, Singapore and Taiwan have been very proactive in their policies in attracting FDIs to the life sciences sector. The advantages offered by these countries include extra tax benefits, establishment of research and development facilities and appropriate funding. The availability of such facilities had attracted RMD (rubber medical devices) companies to readily start business in these countries. Mr. Ward suggested that Malaysia may wish to consider implementing a more aggressive initiative to attract high-end medical companies as well as high-calibre professionals from the RMD field to Malaysia.

Mr. Garvey advised that one of the means to fast track FDIs into Malaysia is for Malaysian companies to initiate collaborative partnerships with companies in Ireland. Once a bridge has been built and there is trust and understanding among the players, it would be easier for the Irish companies to consider investing in a particular country.

Seminar on the use of examination gloves in a healthcare environment, Barcelona

(11 March 2009)

The Catalonian Department of Health in Barcelona, Spain, organized a half-day seminar on 11 March 2009 entitled 'Latex Allergy in a healthcare environment' which Roland Newell from MREPC (Europe) attended. The seminar was held at the behest of several prominent scientific societies in Catalonia which, since 2007, had been seeking ways to educate the local health industry in the use of personal protective equipment such as examination gloves. The briefing was very well attended with over 200 participants including healthcare workers from medical bodies and hospitals, local government departments and glove distributors.

The societies instrumental in getting this seminar organized included the Catalan Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, the Catalan association of Allergology Graduates in Nursing and the Spanish Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology, with support from other latex allergy support groups.

These societies spent one and a half years formulating recommendations as to the safe use of examination gloves in all healthcare environments. These recommendations particularly considered the incorrect use of vinyl gloves in totally inappropriate clinical procedures. Such gloves are being used in hospitals primarily because of cost considerations.

The seminar was chaired by Antoni Plasencia, Director General of Public health, Catalonia, and presentations included a talk on the safe use of NR latex examination gloves in a healthcare environment by Dr. Ramon Leonart Belfill, Immunology and Allergy specialist at the Hospital Bellvitge, Barcelona.



Participants at the Seminar

Although many of the recommendations would be considered self-evident in many developed countries, it nevertheless demonstrates that in the Catalonia region of Spain latex management is being advocated much more forcibly than before, and that the overall message from the seminar was that NR latex gloves are perfectly safe to use with the proviso that correct latex management should always be carried out.

Briefing to Industry (Northern Region)

(17 February 2009)

Hot on the heels of its successful launch of the MREPC 2009 Incentives and Rubber Product Statistical Bulletin coupled by the official opening of the MREPC Rubber Medical Devices Seminar by Datuk Peter Chin Fah Kui, Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities on 22 January 2009, MREPC organized a briefing to industry in the northern region on 17 February 2009 in Penang. A total of 27 representatives from 19 companies participated in the event.

The event was to brief industry players on MREPC's new and improved incentives, provide an update on MREPC's market promotion activities for 2009, and share the findings from MREPC's Rubber Medical Devices Report. A coaching session on the incentives was also included to provide industry players with a personalized one-to-one session on incentive application procedures.

Majority of the participants found the overall briefing very useful and informative.

The presentation on MREPC's 2009 incentives and marketing activities served as an eye opener for the industry to utilize the incentives available and minimize their financial burden. It was viewed by participants as a commendable effort from MREPC to engage with Malaysian rubber product manufacturers to assist them in export activities. The introduction was considered useful as it provided a platform for companies to seek clarifications on particular incentives.



Participants being assisted by MREPC staff during the one-to-one coaching session



R. Krishnasamy from MREPC with his briefing

As for the market information and research findings shared, RMD manufacturers found them useful in assisting them to make sound decisions on future marketing activities. Companies were provided with information about the growing market potential for selected RMD products in various markets.

Trade Fair **Tips** - Staffing Your Booth

Booth personnel are the lifeblood of your exhibit strategy. Without dynamic trade show staffing, your pre-event marketing activities, eye-catching exhibit, excellent signage, product demonstrations, and high-appeal giveaways may be wasted. During exhibitions, booth representatives not only personify your product's quality and image but also carry the responsibility for pre-qualifying your exhibit visitors and establishing relationships that convert prospects into leads and then into buyers.

It goes without saying that booth personnel must be friendly, lively, and fully engaged in achieving your company's goals. They should be the company's best and the brightest representatives – those who deeply believe in the product, have superior communication and customer service skills, and fully understand the company's objectives. In other words, the effectiveness of an exhibit team can make or break the success at any given show.

The following are some broad guidelines for effective trade show staffing.

1. Training for trade show staffing should include

- i. A well-practised script – Companies need to develop a thirty-second script or “elevator speech” where visitors are greeted professionally yet quickly; staffers introduce themselves and then proceed to describe the company's product features and benefits. Everyone should rehearse it so that all team members can consistently, effectively and effortlessly talk about the product, explain how it helps and serves users, and discuss why it is better than others available on the market today. Questions should be designed to assist staff to determine if the visitors are good prospects and enable staff to gain comprehensive visitor information for effective follow-up after the event. This could be achieved

by developing creative, specific, open-ended questions which would accelerate the conversation and lead to the discovery of a deeper connection or common point of interest. Generic questions like “How are you?” should be avoided to prevent receiving canned answer like, “F.I.N.E.” which also stands for “Feelings I'm Not Expressing”.

- ii. How to properly qualify a potential customer who shows interest, so that time could be spent on visitors that are most likely to produce results.
- iii. How to give a proper demonstration of the company's product. Companies need to REMEMBER to take into consideration the cultural sensitivities, political climate and business peculiarities of each region/country when developing the script.

2. A simple and quick way for the staff to generate leads, such as a badge scanner or guest book, should be used so that time could be spent on productive discussions with the visitors. Booth staff should be trained to encourage all visitors to either sign the book or scan their badges. Collect business cards from visitors most likely to produce results to minimize confusion when reviewing post-show data. Giveaways should be made contingent on visitors giving their business cards.

3. Prepare comprehensive information for trade show personnel on what will be expected of them. This includes

- i. **How to dress** – Attire is something that differs from organization to organization. Some companies have corporate apparel (e.g., polo shirts, sport coats, dress shirts) while others give employees some direction on personal attire with colours and clothing style. Attire should, however,

help to reinforce trade show booth themes, and should also be perceived as respectful of the organizers and attendees of the show itself.

- ii. **When to arrive and how long they will need to staff a booth** – Trade show staff is usually responsible for booth setup, and they should arrive early enough to make sure that all materials are properly displayed and ready for show attendees. Companies need to ensure that the booth is staffed adequately to allow attendees easy access to staff, and to consider needs for lunch and/or other breaks. Companies need to emphasize the importance of staff remaining in the booth through the completion of the scheduled hours. It is amazing the number of booths where staff disappears 15, 30, even 45 minutes before the end of a show.
- iii. **Proper trade show etiquette** – Stand up and greet attendees in front of the booth. Smile and make eye contact with attendees from all directions. Be mindful of other people in the booth and near your space and do not enter the space of another exhibitor. Thank attendees for spending time at your booth when they arrive

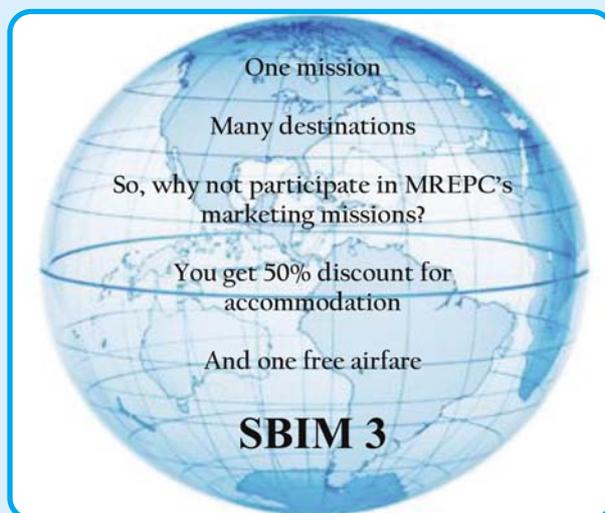
and leave. No eating or drinking in the booth and most importantly, **DO NOT CHEW GUM** in the booth. Above all, always remain polite and professional.

- 4. Do not overstaff your booth – Determining your trade show staffing needs correlates to the size of your booth, relevancy of the audience attending, and type of event in which you are participating. As a rule of thumb, always have a minimum of two staff at the booth. Ideally, the staffing formula to use is that staff should take up 30 percent of the booth space. Staffing your exhibit area with too many people may turn away potential visitors, who may think your exhibit is too crowded to navigate. And it goes without saying that the entire team should know clear and quantifiable objectives for your show, and be made part of the effort to attain them.

Personal relationship building, need-based sales consulting, and attentive service are essential to fully leverage trade show efforts. Upon returning from the show, it is imperative for staff to follow up leads immediately with phone calls, packets, personal letters, and invitations for meetings to discuss next steps.

Join us in the next issue of Stretch for “Effective Trade Fair Display”.

(Article credit: R. Krishnasamy & Nawal Ali, Industry Relations and Public Affairs Division, MREPC).



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