

STRETCH

A quarterly publication of the
Malaysian Rubber Export Promotion Council

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Striking for Global Presence



The country is exporting and importing medical devices, including those made of rubber. In its most general sense, a medical device is an object which is useful for diagnostic or therapeutic purposes. Some examples include blood pressure monitors, catheters, condoms and X-ray machines. Gloves, such as medical and surgical gloves, are also classified as medical devices. Due to its central importance to health and safety, and in line with other national practices, the Ministry of Health (MOH) Malaysia, has initiated the Medical Device Bill as a legislative basis for uniform national control over medical devices traded in the interest of public health and safety. This regulatory measure seeks to harmonize the essential safety and performance criteria for a medical device that allow manufacturers to demonstrate their products are suitable for their intended use.

Such a regulation is already in place in many of the countries that Malaysian manufacturers export medical devices to. In Malaysia, however, import of medical devices is not regulated and medical devices that may be of dubious quality may continuously be imported. Malaysians are thus inundated with imported rubber medical devices that may not even meet local established standards, whilst Malaysian manufacturers are expected to produce quality medical devices, including rubber products such as condoms, catheters and gloves for the export market. This Bill is thus very timely to eliminate, *inter alia*, some unsafe medical devices from reaching our shore and jeopardising the health and safety of our people.

The Bill will regulate all phases of the medical device life cycle, from design and development through its use to its disposal.

The merits of the Bill have mandated its early implementation and this should be expedited for the benefit of the industry.



CEO of MREPC Dato' Teo Suat Cheng

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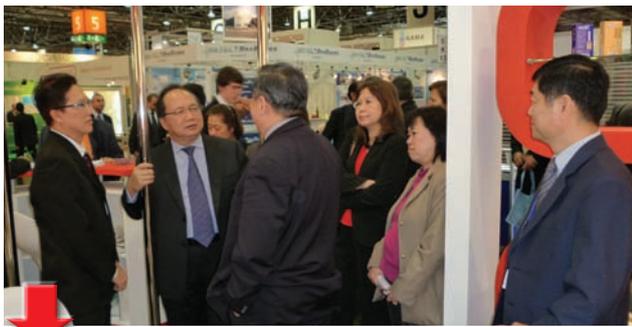
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TAN SRI BERNARD DOMPOK,

Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities, visits **MEDICA 2009**



Tan Sri Bernard Dompok (second from left) in discussion with Malaysian participants

MEDICA is the world's largest medical trade fair and congress, drawing participation from the foremost medical product manufacturers, traders, research institutions and service providers, from all over the world. Users of medical products and services from every part of the hospital and healthcare chain also congregate in Dusseldorf in November each year, to learn what is new in medical technology and gain access to the latest developments in products, systems and services related to medicine and healthcare.

The 40th MEDICA, held from 18 to 21 November 2009 in Dusseldorf, Germany, attracted over 380,000 registered trade visitors from over 100 countries. Over 4,300 exhibitors from 60 nations participated at this year's edition of the world's largest medical trade fair.

The Minister of Plantation Industries and Commodities, Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, visited MEDICA on 20 November 2009, on the last leg of his European Technical and Economic Mission. He visited the MREPC stand, and together with the CEO of MREPC, Dato' Teo Suat Cheng, visited the booths of the other Malaysian manufacturers exhibiting at MEDICA.

MREPC participated at MEDICA 2009, promoting Malaysian-made rubber medical devices. Natural rubber and nitrile gloves were promoted in tandem, highlighting Malaysia's position as the world's largest producer and exporter of medical gloves. Rubber catheters, condoms, breathing bags, cast shields, and finger cots were among the other products promoted by MREPC.

The MREPC exhibition stand received visitors from close to 70 countries, with significant numbers coming from Germany, Spain, India, Greece, the United States, Morocco and Italy. MREPC staff manning the promotion booth received over 220 inquiries related to rubber gloves and other products, which have been subsequently channelled to the relevant manufacturers for follow-up action. Almost 70% of the inquiries were for medical gloves; in addition to natural rubber and nitrile examination gloves, there was interest in surgical, chemotherapy, neoprene, high risk gloves and other gloves for specific applications.

Some inquiries were also received for condoms, probe covers, finger cots, catheters and other rubber products used in the medical and healthcare industries.

Malaysia's position as the world's premier rubber glove producer was clearly evident as a number of inquiries were received from companies wishing to set up glove manufacturing plants in various countries.

Fourteen Malaysian rubber product manufacturers also participated at MEDICA 2009, comprising 12 glove and two condom companies. Participating glove manufacturers were Adventa Health, Comfort Rubber Gloves, Hartalega, Kossan Latex Industries, Latexx Manufacturing, Riverstone Resources, Rubberex Malaysia, Seal Polymer Industries, Smart Glove Corporation, Supermax Glove, Top Glove International and YTY Industries. The condom manufacturers participating were Karex Industries and Richter Rubber Technology.

MREPC's participation at MEDICA this year was an essential part of the market promotion program for Malaysian rubber medical devices and has contributed significantly to increased awareness of Malaysia as a source of quality rubber products for the medical and healthcare sector.

The Minister was impressed with the strong representation from Malaysian rubber product manufacturers at MEDICA and their efforts to promote Malaysian rubber medical devices to the world market. The manufacturers, on their part, were pleased with the interest shown by the Minister in their products and their promotional activities.

Automotive Technology Fair, Poznan (7–10 May 2009)

The 2009 Poznan Automotive Technology Fair took place from 7 to 10 May 2009 at the Poznan International Fair Grounds, the biggest and oldest exhibition centre in Poland. The Automotive Technology Fair offered exhibitors the opportunity to present new products to the Polish market, strengthen cooperation with existing partners and gain new clients.

Exhibitors showcased a comprehensive range of equipment for car repair shops, vehicle testing stations and car washes, along with spare parts and components, automotive electronics, car accessories, car maintenance and care products. In total, 500 brands were represented by 350 exhibitors from 15 countries during this exhibition. Most of the exhibitors were from Poland, with some from Turkey, China, Taiwan, and other European countries.

MREPC participated in this Automotive Technology Fair for the first time together with MALCORP, Schmaco Auto Parts, Fudex Rubber Products and HML Auto Industries. Generally, the event was not as well attended as some of the major trade shows, possibly because of the current downturn in the economy and the difficulties facing the automotive industry in Europe. Although the total number of enquiries received was below expectations, Malaysian exhibitors reported that some potential sales may be generated in the near future.



Malaysian representatives at the Poznan Fair

The Polish market for rubber automotive products holds good potential, in terms of the domestic market, as well as for entry into the European market. MREPC's participation at the Poznan Automotive Technology Fair should be seen as an exploratory step towards the development of the Polish and other nearby markets.

The American Dental Association (ADA) Exhibition, Hawaii (1–3 October 2009)

The American Dental Association (ADA) is the largest and oldest national dental association in the world. It has more than 155,000 dentist members, 53 constituent (state-territorial) and 545 component (local) dental societies. The ADA Dental Show this year was held in conjunction with the Annual Session and the 150th anniversary celebration of the Association. A total of 650 exhibitors participated in this year's event with 26,444 visitors at the show. Of the latter, there were about 8,129 dentists and 14,864 dental professionals.



Visitors to Malaysian booths at ADA

MREPC participated together with three SMG-certified manufacturers, namely, Supermax, Tekmedic (M) Sdn. Bhd. and Comfort Rubber Industries. The SMG pavilion occupied an island booth of 600 sq. feet.

Of the 650 exhibitors, only four other companies (excluding MREPC and the three Malaysian companies) promoted gloves.

MREPC received 199 visitors mainly from the US with a few from Philippines, Japan, Nairobi, Sao Paulo and Canada. Of the US visitors, a large majority hailed from California and Hawaii.

The ADA Exhibition was attended primarily by end users of gloves. As such, most visitors to MREPC's booth were glove users. Generally, they found that the quality assurance provided by SMG attractive and they liked the feel and tactile sensitivity of the SMG gloves they tried. One dental professional who was committed to synthetic gloves even admitted he was impressed by the SMG gloves and would now like to study the applicability of the SMG low-protein powder-free gloves in his practice.

China, Here We Come!

The global economic crisis that surfaced a year ago has caused China to receive more attention from the world than ever before. With the United States and Europe still struggling to wrangle out of the grips of recession, China is right on track to achieve its targeted 8% growth in this economically tumultuous period.

Why is the world interested in China, especially now? For a start, unlike the economies in the West, China has increased its foreign reserves to a record high of US\$1.6 trillion at the beginning of this year. Secondly, the Chinese Government is encouraging spending by its 1.3 billion citizens. China certainly seems like an excellent alternative market for soaking up production capacity made redundant by waning demand in the domestic and other overseas markets. China has the propensity to spend and is spending.

Whilst China is attractive from the angle of sales demand, the ugly angle for many overseas manufacturers is that China is the factory of the world. One cannot help but notice “Made in China” stamped on most products in the world. Chinese products are prevalent in the least developed to the most developed nations. These “Made in China” products accessed foreign markets by means of relatively low prices and product quality that is acceptable to the buyers. This phenomenon has encouraged entrepreneurs to “Buy from China” instead of “Make in their own Country”.

Mindful of the “Yin and Yang” of selling in China, MREPC led a delegation of five Malaysian manufacturers of latex medical gloves and finger cots in search of business. The delegation comprised Dr. Chew Cheng Sim representing MREPC, Ms. Lea K. Low representing Adventa Health, Ms. Ooi Hui Ming representing Hartalega, Ms. Cairone Lee representing Microclean Tech Rubber (M) Sdn. Bhd., Mr. K.L. Lee representing Riverstone Resources and Ms. K.C. Khor representing Sinetimed Consumables Sdn. Bhd., with Dr. Peter N.S. Thong as MREPC’s representative in China.

The delegates discussed matters in depth with senior management of the State Food and Drug Administration, pharmaceutical chain stores, medical devices agents and distributors who have been supplying to hospitals and the public, a number for more than 20 years. The

delegates also gained the support of the Malaysian ambassador to China Dato’ Norulzaman, Malaysian Trade Commissioner Mr. K.H. Too and Malaysian Assistant Trade Commissioner Mr. Y.J. Chong for their endeavours in China, particularly on matters at a government-to-government level.

The mission was indeed an eye opener for the delegates on how complementary opposites like huge sales demand and intense competition function within a greater whole in China. With this enlightenment, the gates to open and the path towards exporting successfully to China became brighter for these delegates. One message is clear. The Malaysian manufacturer has to be an integral and active partner of the supply chain in China, more so initially to create a presence and awareness in the market.

The law mandates that the manufacturer wishing to supply medical devices in China register its products and obtain the China Compulsory Certificate (CCC) before its products can be imported and sold in China. Malaysian-made examination and surgical gloves and finger cots fall into Class II of Imported Medical Devices under the State Food and Drug Administration supervision. The three classifications are as follows:

- Class I** Medical Devices

Safety and effectiveness can be ensured through routine administration.
- Class II** Medical Devices

Further control is required to ensure their safety and effectiveness.
- Class III** Medical Devices

Implanted into the human body, or used for life support or sustenance, or pose potential risk to the human body and thus must be strictly controlled in respect to safety and effectiveness.

Hospitals are the biggest collective customer for medical glove manufacturers. Hospitals in China either buy through a Government Tender Office or through their Procurement Departments. The sources of supplies are manufacturers, pharmaceutical chain stores, manufacturers' agents and resellers. The supply chain for medical gloves is strongly in place in China. Malaysian exporters will need to devise ways of dislocating the existing links in order to take over as a new supply chain partner.

As in any market, product quality, competitive price, availability of stocks, customer service, terms of sales, seller-buyer relationship and credibility count a lot in China even after getting China Compulsory Certificate from the State Food and Drug Administration.

The path towards success is laden with lots of opportunity for the Malaysian manufacturers. How quickly a Malaysian manufacturer can thrive in the Chinese market will depend on how skilful this Malaysian manufacturer is in converting the Chinese buyers to prefer buying Malaysian gloves to the gloves that the hospitals have been buying for years.

This MREPC Rubber Medical Device Mission has certainly brought Malaysian latex gloves and finger cot manufacturers closer to tapping the lucrative Chinese market. This delegation has established new links in China. Stronger bonds between the delegates and their new friends in China will certainly bring about successful sales of latex gloves and finger cots from Malaysia in China. The delegates also educated the potential Chinese customers they met on the unique selling points of their products through this Mission. The Chinese are impressed by the delegates' product knowledge and enthusiasm.



Clockwise from top left: The Malaysian delegation at the State Food and Drug Administration, Golden Elephant, MATRADE and Beijing De Wei Zhi pharmaceutical chain

Article Credit:

Dr. Peter N. S. Thong – Dr. Peter Thong serves as MREPC's representative in China

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

Country	January–September 2009	January–September 2008	% Change	% Share (2009)
EU-27	2,161,026	2,499,662	-13.5	28.0
USA	2,063,916	2,125,160	-2.9	26.7
ASEAN	655,428	784,176	-16.4	8.5
Japan	425,197	443,976	-4.2	5.5
Brazil	290,756	268,697	8.2	3.8
China, P.R.	289,829	210,374	37.8	3.8
Australia	226,093	273,996	-17.5	2.9
Hong Kong, SAR	182,416	266,855	-31.6	2.4
Canada	138,457	138,999	-0.4	1.8
Turkey	109,676	93,652	17.1	1.4
South Korea	91,610	106,635	-14.1	1.2
UAE	87,579	96,237	-9.0	1.1
Subtotal	6,721,983	7,308,419	-8.0	87.1
World Total	7,719,725	8,327,951	-7.3	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	925,776	200,292	250,239
February	795,508	882,574	164,926	193,284
March	873,637	933,783	218,472	265,121
April	846,888	838,236	216,393	198,794
May	841,560	930,709	212,196	225,328
June	822,125	865,359	225,269	247,505
July	910,788	957,761	267,368	267,279
August	929,840	996,491	251,913	274,756
September	822,954	997,262	252,704	256,560
January–September	7,719,725	8,327,951	2,009,533	2,178,868
% Change (January–June) 09/08	-7.3		-7.8	

Source: Department of Statistics, Malaysia

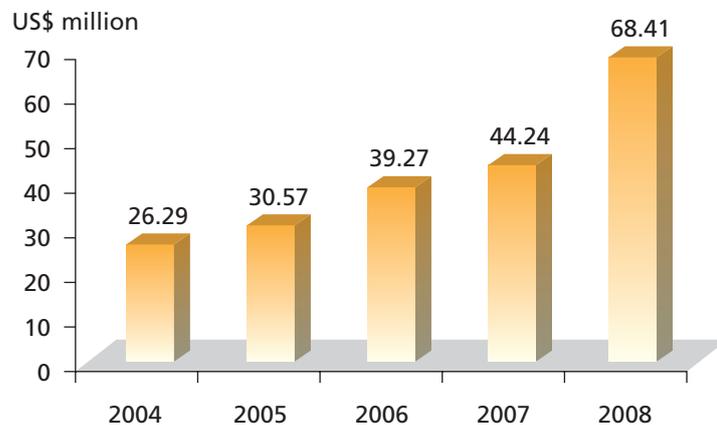
Top Quality Latex Condoms from Malaysia

Known as the world's leading nation in the supply of high quality rubber medical gloves, Malaysia, which emerged as the world's second largest exporter of latex condoms in 2006, could become the world's leading exporter in 2009. Malaysia produces a wide range of high quality condoms by utilizing premium grade latex materials. The condoms are manufactured in plants with the-state-of-the-art facilities. Malaysian manufacturers are also constantly carrying out extensive R&D to ensure that each of the condoms produced effectively helps in preventing the spread of any sexually-transmitted disease if used as instructed.

The market strength of Malaysian condoms may be seen in their phenomenal growth in export since 2004. Export of condoms by Malaysia increased by more than twofold between 2004 and 2008. A total of US\$68 million worth of condoms was exported in 2008 compared to only US\$26 million in 2004 (Chart 1). This represents a phenomenal compounded annual growth rate of 27%, unchallenged by other condom exporting countries.

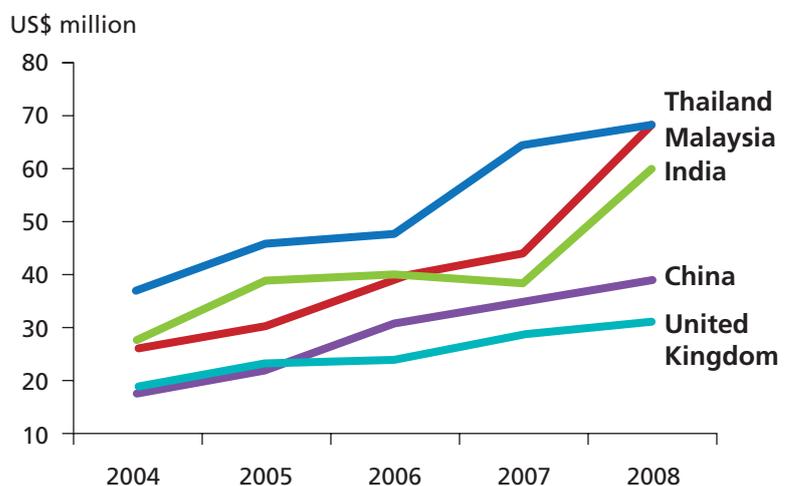
The success story of Malaysia as a condom exporter may be seen in Chart 2. Malaysia was the world's fifth largest exporter in 2004 (not shown in Chart 2) and rose to become the second largest exporter with a 14% market share in 2008.

Chart 1: Malaysia's Exports of Condoms, 2004 to 2008



Source: Global Trade Atlas

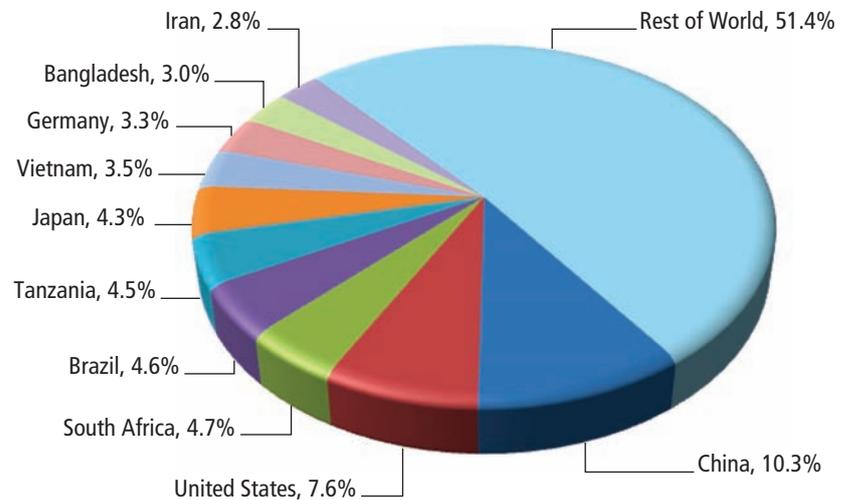
Chart 2: Top 5 Exporters for Condoms in 2008



Source: Global Trade Atlas

Global recognition of Malaysia's capability to produce quality latex condom is evident through its highly diversified export market. Approximately 10% of the condoms were exported to China, Malaysia's top export destination in 2008 (Chart 3). Other countries like the United States, South Africa, Japan, Germany and Brazil are among Malaysia's major importers. The ability of Malaysian condom manufacturers to penetrate the markets of developed countries despite stringent quality control by these countries indicates the capability of Malaysian condom manufacturers in complying with strict national and international standards.

Chart 3: Malaysia's Export Destinations of Condoms in 2008



The Malaysian condom industry comprises a group of established manufacturers and exporters supplying an extensive range of latex condoms globally. Besides their in-house brands, Malaysian manufacturers are also flexible enough to supply private labels or naked condoms to OEM distributors. If you are searching for condoms of exceptional quality, you can source for them from our list of reputable manufacturers and suppliers in our website, www.mrepc.com. Alternatively you may visit the companies' websites as listed below:

Malaysian Exporters for Condoms

Company	Brands	Website / Links
Biogreen Medical Sdn. Bhd.	RBX, Durant	www.biogreenmedical.com.my
Dongkuk Techco Rubber Industries Sdn. Bhd.	Pamitex, Skinless Skin, Shadow, Musculan, Peace, Freestyle, Andro-plas, Intim De Lus	www.mrepc.com/trade/company_profile.php?mrepc_no=00023
Dynamic-Era Trading Sdn. Bhd.	Besure, Dynamic-Era	mol.matrade.gov.my/application/meod.nsf/profile?OpenForm&id=8092
Hevea Medical Sdn. Bhd.	Ultra	www.mrepc.com/trade/company_profile.php?mrepc_no=00074
Innolates Sdn. Bhd.	Inno	www.innoltx.com
Karex Industries Sdn. Bhd.	Carex	www.karex.com.my
Medical Latex (Dua) Sdn. Bhd.	Duo, Harmony, Sanamed Duo, Hansaplast, ESP, N'Joy	www.espcare.com
NRS Global Partners Sdn. Bhd.	Maxpro, Premium, Climax, Pretex	www.nrsint.com
Nulutex Sdn Bhd.	Ego, Feel, Good Times	www.nulutex.com
Pleasure Latex Products Sdn. Bhd.	Sure, PLP, Safeway, VIP, Cheers, Chilli, Kingdom	www.plp.com.my
Richter Rubber Technology Sdn. Bhd.	Viva	www.richterrubber.com
Sagami Manufacturers Sdn. Bhd.	Sagami	www.sagami-gomu.co.jp/en/
Sebong Rubber Sdn. Bhd.	Virgin Manjakani, Rhydom, Between, Mr Happy Hats, Trust	www.sebongrubber.com
SSN Medical Products Sdn. Bhd.	Coral, Rindu	www.ssnmedical.com
Takaso Rubber Products Sdn. Bhd.	Romantic, Playsafe, Anytime, Song Song	www.takaso.com

Striking for Global Presence



Kevin Loke Kah Wai, CEO of Kumpulan Jebco



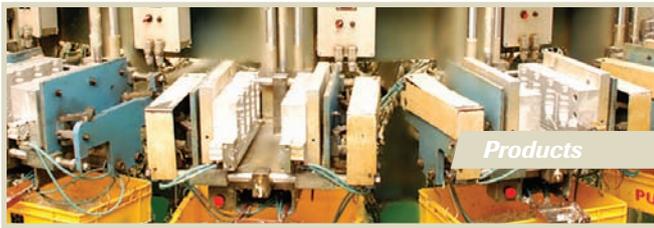
Everybody knows that an automobile runs on rubber tyres, but not many may be aware of the other myriad rubber components used in the vehicle to make your ride not only a safe, but a pleasant one as well. Such vehicular rubber components include engine mounts, hydromounts, bushes, hoses, belts, gaskets, exhaust hangers and others, and have spawned an industry providing such products. Among several Malaysian players in this area, Kumpulan Jebco (M) Sdn. Bhd. is no newcomer, as it has been in operation since 1975.

Kumpulan Jebco is the manufacturing arm of Kumpulan Jetson Berhad, a public listed company in Malaysia. The other activity of the group is in construction and property. Jebco itself has three subsidiaries engaged in precision moulds, tools and dies manufacturing, plastic packaging products, and manufacturing environmental friendly sealants and adhesives for industrial applications. Jebco has been involved in the manufacture of automotive and anti-vibration rubber-metal components since the inception of the company. Two years ago, however, the company decided to amend its vision to be a world-class manufacturer in its core products, according to its chief executive officer, Kevin Loke Kah Wai, who assumed the helm of the company in the year 2007. Core products comprise rubber-to-metal anti-vibration products for the automotive, rail and agricultural sectors as well as other industrial applications, thermoplastic elastomer boots, high performance microcellular polyurethane jounce bumpers, and dampers. This re-focus in direction arose from the realization that it was not possible to compete with the world's bests in all its product range, and it would be prudent to concentrate on the few that the company was good at. Besides, even in terms of its core products, the company is only a fraction the size of the world's

bests. By focusing on its core products, the company is gearing towards establishing itself as a global player.

Loke outlines four mid-term strategies:

- As far as the local automotive market is concerned, Jebco intends to move up the value chain through differentiation in products in terms of engineering and quality. It is the only Malaysian company supplying hydromounts to the national automotive manufacturers Proton and Perodua.
- For the export market, Jebco intends to improve further in aspects of quality, cost, delivery and engineering, in order to compete against the world's best suppliers for similar products. It currently exports 30% of its products, and intends to increase this to its target of 50% in the near term. As it is, it supplies mainly to tier-1 suppliers as direct supply as OEM to the major automotive companies presents a huge challenge. Like all businesses, the company was adversely affected in the fourth quarter of 2008 and the first quarter of 2009, but the picture is beginning to appear more rosy in the third and fourth quarters of 2009. The company also takes cognizance of the fact that the advent of electric vehicles would bring about a drastic change in the requirements of their polymer parts.
- Jebco has set sight on emerging markets such as China and India, and its plant in China is expected to begin operation in the first quarter of 2010, while that in India is expected to come onstream in 2011. It intends to be a regional player, meeting its nearby competitors from Thailand head-on.
- Diversification to other sectors will be the target of its subsidiaries.



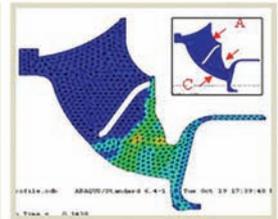
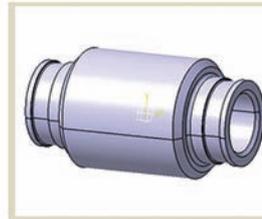
TESTING CAPABILITIES

MATERIALS

COMPONENTS

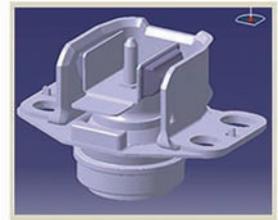


RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT CAPABILITIES



PRODUCT DESIGN
Modeling - CAD
* *Catia 5.0*

Static Dynamic Analysis
Failure Analysis Simulation
* *Abaqus Standard Solver*
* *Abaqus CAE*



In order to compete as a global player in its core products, Jebco practises the most stringent of management processes, modelled after Japanese methods, coupled with the best German engineering practices. As testimony to its quality management practices, Jebco has been certified to ISO 9001 in 1996 and ISO TS16949 in 2006. It has since 2008 become the second company in the country to be audited and certified as a supplier to Volkswagen AG, another feather in its cap in making inroads as a supplier to the large automotive manufacturers.

Jebco works in collaboration with its customers on design, production and quality verification of components, from conception to actual output as a one-stop solution provider for polymer based anti-vibration products. It uses 3D/CAM and Abaqus CAE software to optimize all aspects of design work.



Jebco's high quality products include:

- **Automotive products** – bushes, engine mounts, ball bushings, exhaust hangers, cushion strut bars, constant velocity joint boots, bellows.
- **Railway products** – bogie and suspension components such as elastic bushes, rubber springs, spherical bearings, axle box bushes, suspension springs, rail pads.
- **Agricultural and industrial products** – cylindrical mounts, bushing, plate mounts.

A range of testing facilities is available in-house for material and product quality assurance to ensure they meet with standards and other requirements. The company has won numerous awards within the local automotive industry for its products and performance.

For more information on Jebco's range of products, visit its website at



Correcting Misinformation about Natural Rubber Latex Gloves by MREPC

On 27 July 2009, an article was published in the COLUMN, a website in Destin, Florida, USA, entitled "The deadly glove: Hidden dangers in our restaurants". In the article, the writer, a nurse/paralegal, warned all the restaurants in Destin, Florida that they should not use latex gloves as these could cause a serious and potentially life-threatening emergency for their consumers. She even wrote to the Governor, the Mayor and the Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association about the supposedly danger of latex gloves, and asked that the use of latex gloves be banned in the State of Florida.

To this, the MREPC USA Office responded with a letter to the Editor of the COLUMN which has led to the publication as below:

COLUMN: Science doesn't back up worries about latex gloves in Destin restaurants

August 25, 2009

Esah Yip

Re: The July 27 column in the Destin Log about the so-called "Deadly Glove" and the use of latex in Destin restaurants. As for the fear of latex protein allergy related to using latex gloves in food handling, it is important to note that there is insufficient scientific and clinical evidence to show that handling food with latex gloves could elicit allergic reactions in consumers through food ingestion. That was the conclusion of the public meeting held to examine this issue by a panel of experts of the U.S. Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition of the FDA in 2003.

The meeting found that "the data linking the presence of these latex proteins in foods to allergic reactions is based primarily on anecdotal evidence, and is very weak." It was also commented that the ban of latex gloves in food handling in the three states, Rhode Island, Arizona and Oregon, was not science-based.

Similarly, the Conference for Food Protection (CFP) in 2002 stated "there is much uncertainty about allergens being transmitted from latex gloves and their effects on consumers." CFP, an influential body that identifies and addresses emerging problems of food safety and formulates recommendations, said more studies need to be done on the matter.

The most important function of gloves in food handling is to protect consumers from infectious organisms or other contaminants on wounded or inadequately washed hands of food handlers.

Studies have consistently demonstrated that latex gloves provide the best barrier protection against transmission of bacteria and viruses, markedly so than the plastic polyethylene and vinyl or PVC gloves (Re: Korniewicz 2002, Rego 1999, Douglas 1997 and Klein 1990).

Using gloves with inferior barrier capability will not protect consumers against potentially harmful infections.

Furthermore, many vinyl gloves contain a highly toxic chemical, namely Di-ethyl hexyl phthalate or DEHP, which can leach out from vinyl products such as gloves, containers, wrappers or medical devices, when in contact with blood, bodily fluids and foods.

The harmful effects of DEHP are well documented. While the U.S. FDA has issued a warning concerning the use of vinyl medical devices in 2002, Japan has banned the use of vinyl gloves with DEHP in food establishments in 2000.

Therefore, banning latex gloves and replacing them with the less safe alternatives, as advocated by the column, will not protect food consumers from the health hazards they need to avoid.

(Dr. Esah Yip is the director of the MREPC Office, USA. It may be mentioned that the author to the article initially reacted quite negatively to MREPC's response. However, at a later date after corresponding with Dr. Yip, she expressed appreciation for information regarding the use of low-protein latex gloves and in particular, Malaysia's effort in making latex gloves safer).

Seminar on the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) – The Quality System Regulation (QSR) and Adherence to 510K

(15 September 2009)

FDA

The seminar on “U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) - The Quality System Regulation (QSR) and Adherence to 510K” was held on 15 September 2009. The facilitator, Mr. S. Jagathesan, is an associate trainer with BSi Management Systems.

Forty-six participants from 22 rubber product manufacturing companies attended the seminar. The participants were primarily quality assurance personnel from glove and condom companies.

The seminar provided an overview of the QSR 21 CFR 820 and covered FDA’s QSR requirements as well as how to prepare for and manage an FDA inspection. Participants were also briefed on the 510K application process and handling of complaints, and medical device reporting for 21 CFR 803 and 804.



Q&A Session with Mr. Jagathesan

The history of FDA, its organization and foreign inspection history were also outlined to the participants.

Workshop on Statistical Process Control (SPC)

(5–6 October 2009)

SPC

MREPC held a two-day workshop on “Statistical Process Control (SPC)” on 5 and 6 October 2009. Twenty-six participants from 14 rubber product manufacturing companies attended the workshop. Most of the participants were personnel from quality assurance, production or engineering departments.

Mr. Kelvin Chung, the facilitator for the workshop, is an associate trainer with BSi Management Systems. After providing participants with an introduction to SPC and basic statistical concepts, the facilitator covered types of control chart, methods for calculating control limits, variables and uses of control charts.

Other topics discussed included process capability, process control vs. process capability, capability indices (cp/cpk/pp/ppk) and attribute control charts.



Mr. Chung having a light moment with participants

Examples of SPC software, along with process capability and Six Sigma as well as an actual case of a company’s implementation of SPC, were also highlighted.

Workshop: Marketing Toolkit

(20–22 October 2009)

A three-day workshop entitled “Marketing Toolkit” was organized by MREPC from 20 to 22 October 2009.

The objective of the workshop was to make available to the participants the Marketing Toolkit necessary to act as a catalyst to facilitate the export of rubber products by Malaysian manufacturers and to expand market share internationally.

A total of 21 participants from 12 companies participated in the event.

With more than 20 years’ experience in senior managerial positions in DHL Malaysia and UK, the facilitator, Mr. Michael Dent, is currently a senior lecturer with the Department of Marketing, Universiti Malaya.

Among the topics covered were the role and definition of marketing, key terms/jargons, SWOT/PEST analysis,



Group presentation for marketing case study project

marketing mix, product life cycle, advertising, publicity and promotion, pricing strategy, marketing planning, differentiated positioning strategy, market segmentation and niche strategy in B2B and B2C markets and global marketing.

Within the three days, in addition to receiving highlights on various marketing theories, participants were divided into groups and had to conduct and present a marketing proposal before “being allowed to graduate”.

Workshop: Productivity Improvement Techniques

(4–5 November 2009)

With the aim to assist companies to continuously strive for excellence, a workshop on Productivity Improvement Techniques was held on 4 and 5 November 2009 by MREPC.

Through a combination of lectures, group discussion and case studies, the two-day workshop, facilitated by Mr. Andrew Cheah, provided participants with an understanding of the importance and significance of productivity in the business environment and how it could assist a company to improve its total productivity scenario and culture.

The workshop introduced participants to the concepts of *real* productivity, productivity measurement and the link between productivity and profit maximization.



Mr. Cheah explaining “Real Productivity Concept”

Participants were also exposed to key volume indicators, Parkinson principle, concept of best performance and value add in productivity, international and industrial benchmarking, productivity indicators, and technical aspects of productivity management. Topics on systematic measurements, tactical aspects, the *numbers exercise*, system concepts and the importance of review were also discussed.

Post-show Analysis

Most of the efforts that go into a trade fair participation come at the front end – deciding on the show, the right message, the best type of booth presentation and so on. By the time the show is over, most people are exhausted and proud that they made it through the whole experience in one piece. Unfortunately the battle is only half over, and it is this last half that leads to better return on investment (ROI).

Before the book is closed on your trade fair participation, it might do you and your company well to ponder for a moment and evaluate how your company performed at the trade fair – what results were accomplished, what problems were encountered and what are the recommendations to improve your company's future participation, as well as how all these could affect your company's overall trade fair program.

To make the job of producing the post-show evaluation more effective than from just the opinions of the staff who were at the fair, it is essential that a complete set of pre-show goals and objectives be established against which management could easily judge the results. If no such goals and objectives were in place and agreed upon by management before the fair, the completion of a major trade fair would be an excellent opportunity to recommend them.

The post-trade fair evaluation should include virtually all aspects of the trade fair participation including, but not limited to: product presentation effectiveness, level of booth duty professionalism, efficient exhibit communications, level of technical and management support provided, hotel and transportation logistics, level of customer care, sales lead management and distribution, literature support operation, press relations, pre- and post-show meeting details, and the fair's overall operation from opening to closing. These data should then be quickly summarized, evaluated and distributed within a week to management, along with the relevant staff recommendations, to ensure that the necessary improvements are made before your company's next participation at a trade fair.

Although ROI is one of the ways to measure the success of a trade fair participation, it is always beneficial to include and consider other benefits as well. These benefits could include establishing the company's brand, creating awareness of new products or features, educating the buyers and building new relationships and alliances with other companies. Pre-show goals and objectives on these non-monetary benefits would also need to be established to allow for effortless post-trade fair analysis.

The desired results of a post-trade fair evaluation would be that management will better understand and appreciate the fact that early planning and accurate execution of goals and objectives will deliver the desired trade fair results. It is critical that the staff indicate to management what is needed to improve, advance and guide the future of your company's trade fair program's effectiveness. A firm understanding of post-trade fair evaluation would enable you to make your approach to exhibiting custom-made for your business; ensure it satisfies your business needs, fulfills your business goals and provides some form of return on your time and financial investments. Use it as an opportunity to consistently refine your approach to business within a trade fair setting. Capitalize and continue aspects that added value to your exhibition and eliminate or alter those that did not.

By effectively utilizing the evaluation, the relevant department could stimulate the process of constructing a more intelligent, well respected and supported approach to trade fair participation by solving acknowledged problems one at a time while enjoying management's support and cooperation.

Article Credit:

Nawal Ali – Nawal is a deputy director with MREPC's Industry Relations and Public Affairs Division

Guide to Selecting International Exhibitions

Trade shows or exhibitions represent a unique marketing opportunity. It is the only place where people come and get to see your products or services upfront. You can make hundreds of face-to-face contact in just a few hours. For most exporters, choosing the right international trade shows has always been a challenge. This is because they could be quite costly and time consuming in terms of preparation and planning. Working with the right organizer and choosing the ideal venue would be a fruitful venture.

There are many trade show organizers around the world promoting almost similar packages across all industries. However, choose one that is endorsed by international bodies such as UFI, an association of the world's leading tradeshow organizers and fairground owners, as well as the major national and international exhibition associations, and selected partners of the exhibition industry. UFI membership is only awarded to fairs which have a proven record of international exhibitor and visitor facilities and which conform to the highest standards.

Another body, INTEREXPO is the global and exclusive association of organizers of exhibitions abroad and of group participations in international trade fairs and exhibitions.

Here are some types of exhibition to be considered:

Simultaneous Exhibitions

It has become a trend to have multiple exhibitions being conducted simultaneously within the same exhibition venue. These exhibitions usually would be complementing each other, such as CommunicAsia where there are nine other exhibitions being conducted for the ICT industry in Singapore. Although the name for the exhibition differs, the target audience would be from the same group. Other industries that are usually grouped together are automotive and automotive components, hospitality and F&B, medical and medical equipment, just to mention a few.

The synergy from the related sectors could bring positive or negative impact. Sometimes, a particular exhibition would be the main attraction, leaving the others less attractive to visitors. Therefore, it is essential to identify if the other exhibitions would bring in the crowd to your booth or otherwise.

Similar Exhibitions

Several similar exhibitions are organized in various countries using the same brand name, such as FHM 2009, a catalyst exhibition for the food and beverages industry, conducted in multiple locations annually. Another similar exposition would be AutoMechanika, an automotive components trade show organized in more than thirteen countries around the world.

Choosing such expositions gives the advantage to the participant to reach different target markets at various geographical venues. It would also provide leverage for the participant to negotiate a better participation package and privileges from the organizers should they sign up for more than one venue.

Permanent Exhibitions

Trade exhibitions that have been going on for more than five years at the same venue surely indicate their acceptance by not only the participants, but more importantly, by the visitors. Renowned international shows such as Arab Health in Dubai, Plas Tech in Bangkok, and MEDICA in Dusseldorf are examples of trade shows that have not only been gaining positive responses year after year from participants, but are showing an increasing number of trade visitors as well. All these information are available either from event brochures or trade journals. However, be aware of permanent shows that are losing their oomph...

Location...Location...Location...

Just like the mantra in the property sector, “Location... Location...Location...” is very much a chant in choosing the right exhibition as well. The exhibition venue should be aligned with your company’s export strategy and market accessibility.

However, if the exhibition is your platform to generally introduce your brand or gauge the market reception towards your products, is it advisable to choose a venue that gives you the highest visitor headcount based on the targeted region, i.e., Singapore or Hong Kong for Asia Pacific, Dubai for the Middle East and Germany for Europe.

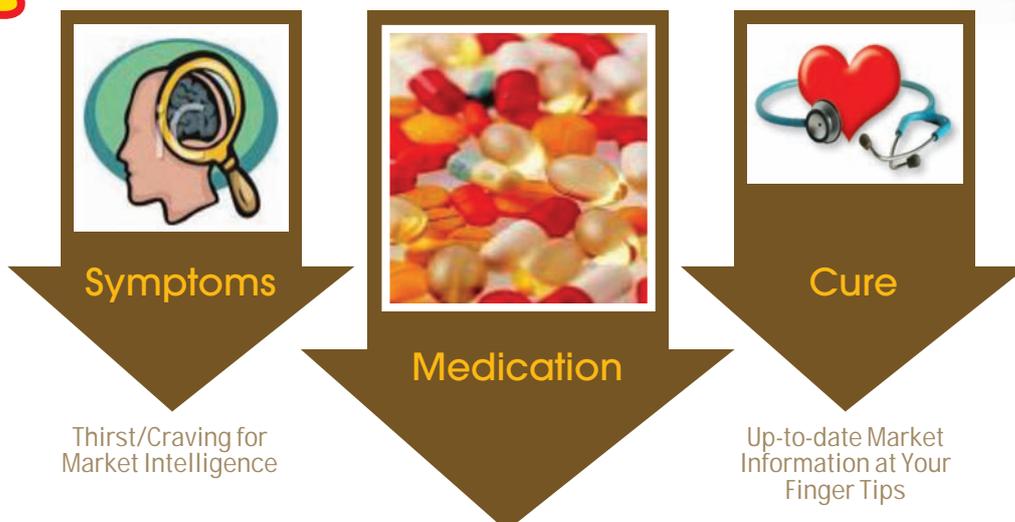
Trade shows are not the answer to every problem nor is any other marketing or communications medium. What is required is a synergy between trade show activities and other marketing or communications strategy and activities. It should be an element that complements existing marketing programmes and not to be considered separately. Trade show marketing and promotional work is about building customer relationships, getting good orders, building your customer list and increasing your business profile. With some investment in time and money in selecting the right exhibitions, you can have a really effective strategy with affordable marketing tools that pay for themselves quickly and often.

Article Credit:

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This Note Will Jolt Your Senses With Valuable Information



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I had mixed feelings when I came to know of my assignment to Poznan. Having had some experience living in and visiting foreign countries, I assured myself that everything would be fine. After all, I assumed, Poland is a European country where English should be widely spoken, therefore sign boards, maps and menus will be available in English – only to find out I was so wrong.

My journey to Poznan took almost 24 hours, including an international flight to Amsterdam and two connecting flights. On arrival, I was required to show my confirmed hotel reservation and explain why I was coming to Poland. When I finally stepped foot in Poznan, I felt a total change in the environment; Poznan is a serene town where the air is clean, hectic traffic is almost non-existent, and people are laid back. I felt like I was in Kuantan, Pahang or some such town in Malaysia, a drastic change compared to Kuala Lumpur, where I was 24 hours earlier.

Poznan is a city in west-central Poland, a three-hour train journey from Warsaw, the capital of Poland. Located on

the Warta River, it is one of the oldest cities in Poland, making it an important historical centre and a centre of trade, industry, and education. Poznan is Poland's fifth largest city, with over 567,800 inhabitants. The 'old city' image is seen throughout Poznan, with most of the buildings from the medieval period.

The centre of Poznan and also the place for 'Poznanians' to chill is the Old Town, the "must-visit" place when you are in Poznan. The Town Hall, a 16th century Renaissance building, and the most important edifice in Poznan, is located in the Old Town. At the top of the Town Hall building there is a clock tower, where, everyday at 12 noon, the tower gate will open and two wooden goats will appear and butt each other. Unfortunately, I did not get a chance to see this because of our tight exhibition schedule.

The Town House is surrounded by old merchant houses, which now house boutiques, beauty parlours, restaurants and bars. These buildings were carefully restored after World War II and their original structure maintained.

Poznan, Poland



Clockwise from top left: The Old Town Square; The Town House, Old Town; The Old Cathedral; and Inside the Cathedral

Another tourist attraction which impressed me in Poznan is the Cathedral, which was built in the year 968 AD. This well maintained structure, which consists of 12 chapels, was the stage for many historical events, including the investitures and funerals of medieval kings and princes. Other tourist attractions in Poznan are the Opera House, the Poznan Museum and St. Johns market, a place for art collectors, where you can see master craftsmen at work.

Like most other European countries, the main and most convenient mode of public transportation is the city tram which connects the main parts of the town. The cost of a one-way ride is PLN1.40, equivalent to RM1.70. You may also buy a one-day ticket where there is no limit to the number of rides, which will cost you PLN27 or RM33. The trams consist of old train coaches with limited seats, so be prepared to stand and please hold on tight to the railings because some of the tram drivers drive like F1 drivers. When you are riding these trams, you need to master the skill of reading the complicated route map to make sure you alight at the right stop and hop on to the next tram where necessary. Taxis are also widely available at affordable rates. One precaution though, ensure you have the address of your destination written down in Polish, because few taxi drivers speak English, and to add to the excitement, most sign boards are in Polish.

At first glance, people in Poznan appeared cold and serious. Their straight and unsmiling faces sometimes made me feel out of place. Nonetheless, if you approach them, they are more than willing to help. I guess one of the barriers is the language. They can only understand basic English, so it is best is to keep it simple, with lots of hand gesture. I talked to our translator, Magda, about this, and she mentioned that in the Polish school system, the main language is Polish and students may choose a foreign language as their elective, and most students choose Russian instead of English. According to Magda, things are changing now and the youngsters in Poznan are aware that knowing how to speak and write in English can put them ahead of others, as is apparent in her own case.

Food prices in Poznan are quite affordable. An entrée at a local café will cost much the same as in our local café, plus 15% more because of the exchange rate and tips. I had a chance to enjoy some Polish delicacies, such as the Polish dumpling. These dumplings are made of cheese and herbs, and served with olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Polish cheese cake is a dessert that you must try because of the heavenly taste and silky texture. It does



not taste like American cheese cake at all; it tastes like a healthier version of cheese cake, but with all the flavour and richness.

As for shopping, I can safely say that Malaysia is far ahead of Poznan in terms of choice and price. In Poznan, there are only two main shopping centres, the larger being the Malta Shopping Centre, which is about the size of Subang Parade. There are also many retail merchants operating from small shops located in the Old Town Square.

My trip to Poznan was an eye opener for me on life in Eastern European countries. Having said that, I find Poznan just too laid back and too quiet. After a week's stay in Poznan, I just couldn't wait to rush home to my favourite place, hectic Kuala Lumpur.

Article Credit:

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