

UFI Marketing Award Entry/Proposal



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TECHNOBIZ

Global Meeting Point for Rubber Industries

The Exhibition

The third edition of GRTE, the Global Rubber, Latex & Tire Expo, was conducted successfully on 9-11 March 2016 in Bangkok, jointly organized by TechnoBiz and the China United Rubber Corporation. Its journey began back in 2012, when even the first edition was positioned as a must-attend fixture on the rubber industry calendar; an integral part of the industry it serves.

The success of the show can be attributed to it being marketed as a 'Perfect Rubber Industry Shopping Mall' for individuals ranging from CEO to Supervisor, a genuinely 'Special Meeting Point'. Edition by edition, this exhibition has evolved into a must-attend event for all rubber industry family members, similar to Chinese New Year for Chinese families and Thanksgiving Day for American families. And they come to learn and share knowledge. The 2016 edition of the exhibition offered education, qualification and assessment in a way that enabled attendees to leave the event equipped better than ever to serve the industry in which they operate.

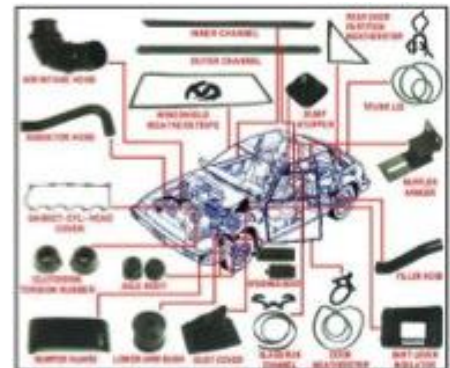
GRTE Evolution	2012	2014	2016
Number of Exhibiting Companies	129	216	299
Number of Overseas Exhibiting Companies	88	151	203
Number of Participants	3,616	5,450	5,209*
Exhibition Area, Sq.M	3,817	5,206	9,600
Educational Courses	20	58	114
Number of Countries Participated	35	49	51

(* In the 2016 edition, visitor quality control strategy was implemented with focus on QUALITY visitors)

The Industry

It is impossible to imagine daily life without rubber products. The automotive sector, for example, is one of the greatest beneficiaries of the rubber industry. Just take a look at this picture. This is a selection of applications for rubber on modern cars. Eighty per cent of natural rubber produced in ASEAN countries is being used to create these. The GRTE exhibition was conceived to cater for the needs of ASEAN companies involved in the production of these parts, and the technologies on display are aimed at improving the process of manufacture for these products.

Of course our show is not limited to the automotive sector. Other products covered by the people who attend the event are latex gloves, condoms and footwear.



Any industrial exhibition helps its industry to grow by providing business opportunities and information exchange, and GRTE exists to aid the growth of the rubber industry.

The Marketing Vision

Since launch, GRTE has adjusted its position in the market, presenting itself as a rubber industry event unlike any other. It has been created in accordance with the themes of a shopping mall; a place for people to attend and hang out, or to meet and exchange knowledge, as well as to buy. There is provision for the interests of every stakeholder, technical and non-technical staff, buyers, sellers and industry observers.

And it has come a long way since its inauguration. The show first launched in 2012 as the Rubber Technology Expo, run solely by TechnoBiz. The feedback was very positive from both exhibitors and visitors, but as any progressive organizer would, TechnoBiz sought to make improvements. In preparation for the second and third editions, the company continued attending rubber exhibitions around the world and observe what it considered the strengths and weaknesses of each in order to implement positive change back at home in Thailand.

The show, now trading as the Global Rubber, Latex and Tire Expo, almost doubled the number of exhibitors, including a climb from 88 to 203 for non-domestic companies exhibiting. And this during a time when we experienced floods (2011) and political tensions (2013-2015) in Bangkok. The key for the positive response for GRTE is simply "Valuable Quality Content".

The Challenge

Despite the inescapable challenge that accompanies building a market presence for an exhibition, that is, creating a sufficient number of editions of a show that it may be considered a genuine meeting point for the industry it serves, GRTE had to overcome a number of other hurdles. TechnoBiz studied each edition's performance and listened to all participants on its weak areas that it needs address.

Below are some issues that emerged.

It is not the only show in the region: The ASEAN is the world's leading region for rubber production and as such, there were already many similar shows to contend with. However, these shows were not focused and included a number of elements. GRTE had to convince stakeholders of its focused approach and unique exhibition elements.

The industry's companies were poorly prepared for exhibiting: Very few of the industry's exhibitors were making the necessary preparation to make their participation in the event worthwhile. The mindset of many exhibitors is mainly focusing on booth decoration and display. This presents a problem in a marketing medium where the exhibiting client is also the product.

Quantity matters over quality: The general perception of exhibitors is that the bigger shows with the busier walkways are the ones to attend. It is crucial to convey the message that quality has a greater impact on value.

Purpose of visitor: Few visitors genuinely come to the show with purpose, which is the result of company management direction. With a clear vision for the show, and marketing to match, we sought to ensure every person to walk through the gates would have a clear understanding of what they could hope to achieve in the time they spent with us.

The Solution

We created a hub for Knowledge and Skill Development, packaged and marketed in accordance with the accessible framework of a shopping mall.

Almost all exhibitions focus on technological innovation. But no matter what advanced and efficient technologies are available, skilled manpower and the sharing of knowledge are the key factors that sustain any manufacturing industry. By this third edition big changes were already being seen in the show's education and knowledge components. The number of educational courses rose from 20 to 58, and there was more to come.

In fact the event has been built around education to such an extent that in 2016 there were 114 educational courses. In 2016, 718 delegates from 21 countries participated in these courses, which were taught by 25 international experts, all gathered in one place. We believe it has never happened in this industry, in this way, before. Other overseas rubber expo organizers began inviting us as the 'Education Partner' for their expos.

With TechnoBiz team's engineering background and work experience in the rubber industry, our mission with the show was tangibly beneficial and fundamentally pragmatic. Engineering is after all a profession in which every component exists in order that the whole can perform as efficiently as possible. The event now includes a research fair, a consultant hub and a knowledge test element, which is an examination that promotes analytical thinking.

And this is how the event was marketed to the industry; as a place to attend and further your understanding of, and value to, an industry.

Many of the companies are family-run business for example, and we want to send them home with their knowledge refreshed. Competent people are only competent when they have been assessed. Any industry develops because of the people special efforts in developing solutions. It is not just the company. It is the individuals that drive the industry.

So we corner the technologists at the show. In some events it is the companies, but we want to encourage professionals to innovate. We have honoured dedicated rubber technologists who have been instrumental in developing the rubber industry.

The visitor is the one that dictates not only the direction of the market, but as an extension of the market, the event itself. The fact is that the most important party at an event is the visitor. After all, the community is responsible for shaping change within an industry.

The objective was to show that our expo creates a 'Positive Catalytic Reaction' in accelerating the industry's growth. By focusing on Knowledge and Skill Development, GRTE was able to present itself as a huge pool of resource including courses, a research fair, publications, awards and more. This approach also increases the retention time of each participant at the expo, which enables them to return to their facilities/factories with an 'Ideas Bag', not just a conventional brochure collection. And all conducted in a shopping mall environment.

The Strategy

With this in mind, GRTE sought to appeal to all potential attendees by informing them that by visiting this 'shopping mall' they could emerge better *educated*, better *qualified* and more *inspired*. We treated all stakeholders as 'part of the team', generating in every individual a sense of ownership of the exhibition. Every stakeholder should feel that GRTE is their event, and that it is necessary to meet in Bangkok every two years.

In practical terms we achieved this through the implementation of the following initiatives and campaigns that elevated the exhibition to a new level. And also, we wanted to engage all our stakeholders on regular basis, not just few months before the exhibition gates opened. GRTE and TechnoBiz services representatives set out to become a team member of each and every stakeholder.

Masterclass for exhibitors: Exhibitor training is fundamental in improving the perceived value of a company's attendance. With this in mind, we established a masterclass for exhibitors. TechnoBiz worked with a leading trainer to develop a bespoke, customisable masterclass module for GRTE exhibitors. The TechnoBiz team made this available to both domestic and overseas exhibitors, a process made possible with the video-based training modules.

In-house magazine: From February 2016, TechnoBiz launched the bi-monthly English language magazine *GRTE Digest*. Through the ownership of its own media partner, the activities of GRTE could be publicised in an effective manner. A complementary weekly e-newsletter was launched after the magazine, offering insight and the latest news from the rubber industry. More information is available at www.grte-digest.com

GRTE Webinars: A series of live online webinars was planned throughout 2016, staged in close collaboration with technical specialists from leading exhibitors.

Exhibitor incentive package: Exhibitors who invite their own customers to visit the exhibition were rewarded with incentives, increasing the supply of buyers through the gate.

Free training ticket for industry partners: Professionals from the industry were invited to attend 114 training courses at the event, exchanging web banners with training tickets.

Rubber products importer/Business matching zone: Through the ASEAN Rising Tradeshow (ART) subsidy, the 2016 edition of GRTE was able to provide partial financial support for rubber products importers to participate in a business-matching zone with rubber products manufacturers and exporters from across the ASEAN region.

Support for rubber technology researchers: In an effort to increase the number of professional visitors, GRTE 2016 provided partial financial support for researchers across the ASEAN region to attend the exhibition.

GRTE Knowledge Test: Again through the support of a subsidy from ART, the 2016 edition of the show was able to introduce a two-hour GRTE Knowledge Test at no cost to participants. The highest scorer in the test received a reward at the close of the exhibition.

The Result

We set out to make GRTE the meeting point for the rubber industry, similar to the way that families meet every New Year. Beyond all else we achieved this by:

- Branding GRTE as a global event
- Creating value for all stakeholders in terms of both their time and money

In order to achieve this we aspired to:

- Educate exhibitors
- Encourage visitors to participate at the events we stage during the exhibition

And we achieved great success.



Here are the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) of the campaign implemented for the 2016 edition of GRTE.

	Target	Result
Master Class for Exhibitors	100	62
GRTE Digest Circulation – Print Edition	13,000	12,000
GRTE Digest Circulation – Digital Edition	1,000	1,500
Exhibitor Incentive Package	40%	19.5%
Free Training Tickets for Industry Partners	100	120
Number of Trade Delegation	2	2
Research Posters Support	120	151
GRTE Knowledge Test Participants	100	125

