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Achira Kekunadola
Chief Operating Officer
BGN Industrial Tyre Pvt. Ltd., Sri Lanka

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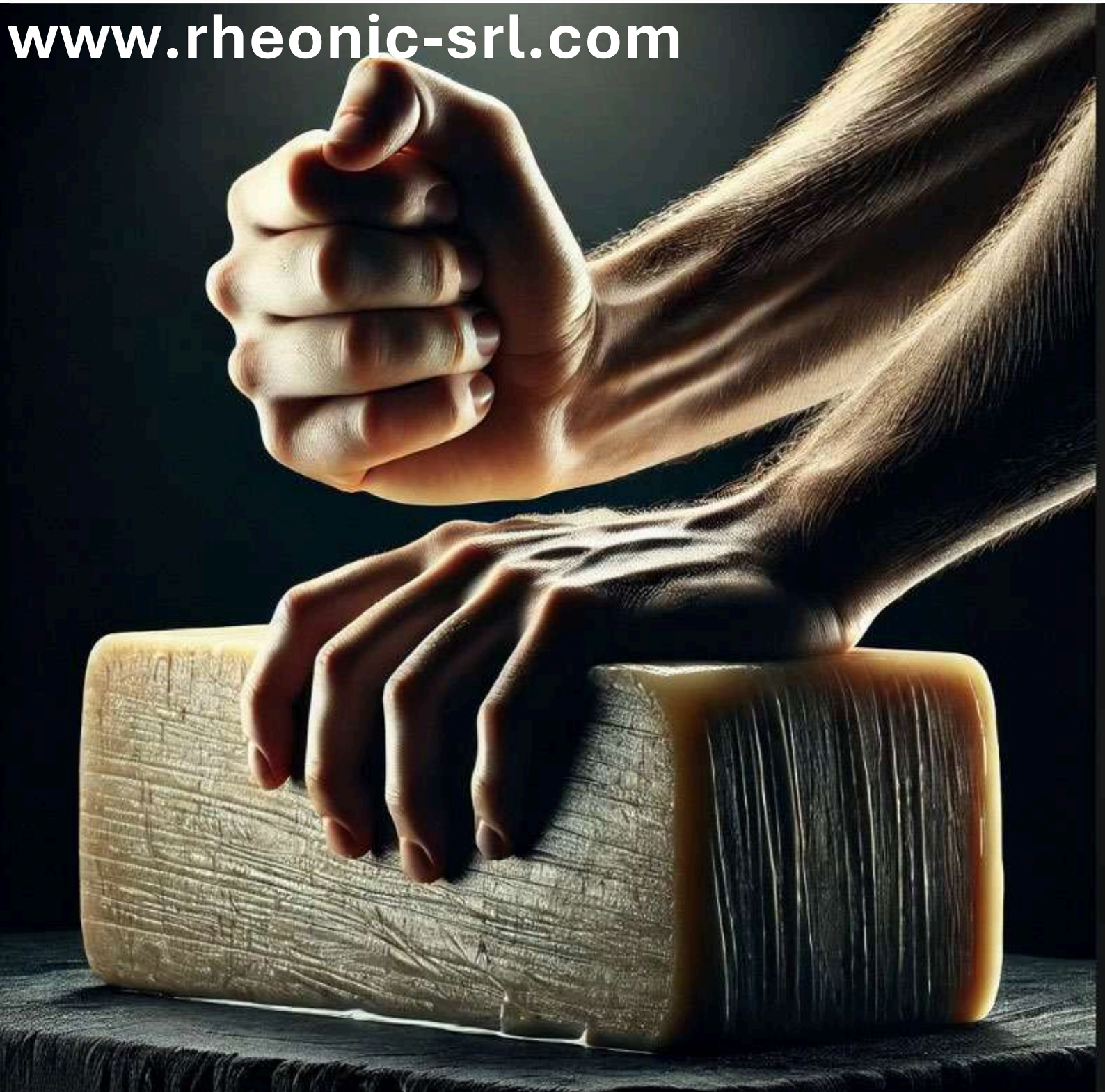

COVER STORY

Conversation with
Achira Kekunadola, Chief Operating Officer BGN Industrial Tyre Pvt. Ltd., Sri Lanka

Please tell us about BGN Industrial Tyre (Pvt) Ltd and Richard Pieris Company PLC. When was it founded, and what are its main activities and product lines?

Richard Pieris & Company PLC, one of Sri Lanka's largest and most diversified conglomerates with a legacy exceeding 90 years. Established in 1932, Richard Pieris & company PLC has played a pioneering role in the development of the Sri Lankan industrial sector, especially in rubber and polymer-based manufacturing. The Group's enduring strength lies in its ability to evolve with the times—combining tradition with innovation across multiple sectors.

Within this expansive Group, the Tyre and Rubber Sectors stands out as a strategic pillar. Richard Pieris & company PLC was among the early movers in Sri Lanka to industrialize natural rubber, leveraging the country's rich natural resources.

In which industries and markets does BGN Industrial Tyres operate? Are there any niche segments you are particularly strong in?

Our tyres serve a variety of industries including logistics, warehousing, ports, airports, manufacturing, and construction. A key strength lies in our ability to offer customized solutions for high-intensity environments like forklift operations, where our solid tyres offer unmatched reliability. We have a niche in heavy-duty solid tyre applications where downtime is critical and performance consistency is non-negotiable.

Are you focusing mainly on domestic markets, or are exports an important part of your business? If so, which international markets are most important to you?

At BGN Industrial Tyre (Pvt) Ltd, our primary focus is on export markets. While we maintain a minimal presence locally, the vast majority—over 95% of our production—is geared toward international clients. Our tyres are supplied to a wide range of global markets, including the USA, Europe, Middle East , and several key countries across Asia.

Our business model, product development, and quality systems are all aligned with the requirements of global OEMs and aftermarket distributors. We specialize in producing high-performance solid tyres tailored for demanding industrial applications, and our ability to meet international certifications and performance standards has positioned BGN as a trusted export partner.

With the strong backing of Richard Pieris & Company PLC, we continue to invest in expanding our global footprint, especially in emerging markets where industrialization is accelerating demand for durable, cost-effective tyre solutions. Export is not just a part of our business—it's the foundation of our growth strategy.

Has BGN Industrial Tyres launched any recent innovations, whether in materials, processes, products, or sustainability?

Yes, innovation is at the core of our strategy. Recently, we introduced advanced rubber compounds that significantly enhance wear resistance and heat dissipation, improving tyre life and performance. On the sustainability front, we are integrating circular economy practices—like rubber recycling and energy-efficient manufacturing—to reduce our environmental footprint.

Are there also new opportunities you see emerging for BGN Industrial Tyre in the coming years?

Absolutely. With global shifts toward automation and sustainability, there are growing needs for high-performance industrial tyres in electric forklifts and autonomous material handling systems. BGN is well-positioned to tap into these sectors through innovation and investment. Additionally, with rising global interest in Sri Lankan manufacturing, we see opportunities for contract manufacturing and OEM partnerships.

Could you share your personal journey in the rubber industry? What first attracted you to this sector and what were the key milestones in your career?

I have over 17 years of experience in the tyre industry, working across both pneumatic and solid tyres. My journey began with a deep curiosity for manufacturing and management. Over the years, I've had the privilege of working closely with global giants across various segments—experiences that shaped my understanding of customer needs, quality standards, and global competitiveness. The rubber industry, especially tyres, offers a unique intersection of technology, material science, and operational excellence—elements that deeply resonate with my professional interests.

You oversee nine manufacturing facilities—how do you ensure operational alignment across such a broad footprint?

Operational alignment across nine manufacturing facilities is made possible through the strength of our highly experienced management team. Each facility is led by professionals with deep industry expertise and long-standing tenure in tyre manufacturing. Their practical knowledge, decision-making capability, and understanding of our business goals play a critical role in ensuring that operations remain consistent and responsive across all locations.

We maintain alignment through clear communication, shared objectives, and structured coordination. Regular leadership reviews, factory visits, and strategic planning sessions ensure that every plant is in sync with the overall direction of the business. In addition, we foster a culture of accountability and cross-facility collaboration, where best practices are continuously shared and implemented.

Our approach is not just about systems—it's about people. The trust, competence, and cohesion among our leadership teams allow us to operate seamlessly, even in a complex and geographically spread-out environment.

What KPIs do you personally monitor most closely to measure plant-level performance?

I focus on a set of practical and impactful indicators that help us keep operations efficient, reliable, and aligned with business goals. These include:

- *Production output vs. plan:* Are we meeting our daily and monthly production targets?
- *Product quality:* How many products pass quality checks the first time without rework?
- *On-time delivery*: Are we delivering to customers as scheduled?
- *Operational cost control*: Are we keeping raw material and production costs under control?
- *Workplace safety:* Are we ensuring a safe and incident-free environment for our teams?
- *Energy efficiency*: Are we optimizing energy use to reduce waste and cost?

Energy efficiency has become especially important as we work toward more sustainable and cost-effective operations. Monitoring these key areas allows me to stay closely connected to plant performance and take timely action when needed.

In your view, what are the top priorities when driving operational excellence in a legacy manufacturing company?

Three priorities stand out: modernization of machinery, empowerment of teams through skill development, and the digitization of processes. Preserving the legacy while adopting new methods is the key to long-term competitiveness.

What challenges do you face when implementing cost optimization without compromising on quality?

Balancing cost and quality is one of the most critical and complex aspects of manufacturing leadership. It's not just about reducing expenses—it's about making smart, sustainable decisions that preserve product integrity while improving overall efficiency.

One of the key challenges is ensuring that all stakeholders—from procurement and production to finance and suppliers—are aligned on the long-term value of quality. There's often pressure to find quick savings, especially in raw material sourcing or process shortcuts, but these can lead to hidden costs such as rework, customer complaints, or brand damage.

Another challenge lies in the availability and consistency of raw materials. In cost optimization, there's a risk of choosing lower-cost inputs that may not perform consistently across batches. This requires a deep understanding of materials science and robust supplier relationships to ensure any changes are thoroughly tested and validated.

We also face challenges when introducing new technologies or automation as part of cost-saving initiatives. While these tools often improve efficiency, they can disrupt workflows or require retraining of staff, which takes time and careful change management.

Ultimately, the key is to build a culture that prioritizes value over short-term savings. We constantly reinforce the message that cost optimization should never come at the expense of customer satisfaction or brand reputation. It's about improving how we work—smarter processes, less waste, better use of energy and resources—while maintaining the high standards our customers expect from BGN and the Richard Pieris tyre sector.

Can you share an example of a major operational or process innovation that created measurable impact?

One of the key improvements we made recently was standardizing work procedures and quality checks across all our production lines. By clearly documenting each step of the process and training our teams to follow the same methods, we were able to reduce mistakes and make operations more consistent.

This change helped us cut down on rework and scrap, and we saw a noticeable improvement in product quality—over 10% increase in first-pass yield. It also made it easier for new team members to get up to speed, as everyone was working with the same clear guidelines.

It's a great example of how a simple, well-executed idea—like tightening up our daily processes—can have a big, measurable impact without needing heavy investment or complex systems.

How do you approach strategic planning in a diversified business like Richard Pieris?

We follow a portfolio approach: each product line is reviewed for market dynamics, customer needs, and technology trends. Strategic planning involves both organic growth (product innovation, capacity expansion) and inorganic opportunities (new market entry, partnerships).

What is your strategy for balancing growth in local versus international markets?

At BGN Industrial Tyre, our business is overwhelmingly internationally focused, with over 95% of our output dedicated to global markets. Export has always been the core of our growth strategy, and we've built strong, long-term relationships with distributors, OEMs, and industrial clients across North America, Europe, Asia, and the Middle East.

That said, we continue to maintain a strategic presence in the local market, primarily to stay close to operational realities and support Sri Lankan industries with high-quality tyre solutions through tyre sector operations. This local grounding also helps us test product improvements and stay agile.

We manage this balance by having dedicated teams focused exclusively on international market development, customer service, and compliance with global standards, while our domestic operations remain streamlined and responsive. This clear focus allows us to grow internationally without losing sight of our roots.

How do you assess which new markets or sectors to enter for Richard Pieris' product lines?

We analyze trade flows, infrastructure investments, and industry growth in target geographies. Customer feedback, competitor benchmarking, and feasibility studies guide our market entry strategies.

How does sustainability play into your strategic planning and investment decisions?

Sustainability is an integral part of how we plan and operate at BGN Industrial Tyre. We consider the entire value chain—from responsible raw material sourcing to smarter logistics—to minimize waste and use resources efficiently.

By embedding sustainable practices into our business model, we not only reduce our environmental footprint but also enhance our long-term resilience and competitiveness. This approach helps ensure that BGN is well-prepared for future challenges while meeting the evolving expectations of our customers and stakeholders.


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With the current global trade landscape, how do you future-proof supply chains?

We focus on diversifying our supplier base to reduce dependency on any single source and strengthen our supply chain resilience. Building strong, long-term partnerships with suppliers allows us to better navigate fluctuations in raw material prices and logistics challenges.

While our digital supply chain visibility is still developing, we are actively working on improving transparency and responsiveness. Additionally, thorough scenario planning and risk assessments help us prepare for potential disruptions, ensuring continuity in our operations despite the uncertainties in global trade.

You have worked across iconic brands like Canon, Michelin, and Merck—what marketing principles from those experiences do you now apply at Richard Pieris?

From my experience with global leaders like Canon, Michelin, and Merck, I've embraced several core marketing principles that guide our approach at BGN Industrial Tyre. Customer-centricity is paramount—understanding customer needs and delivering solutions that truly address their challenges. At Michelin, I saw how building trust through consistent product performance can turn customers into loyal advocates. Canon taught me the critical importance of reliability and precision, which translates into ensuring our tyres perform consistently in demanding industrial environments. From Merck, I learned the power of integrating scientific rigor and innovation into brand storytelling, which helps communicate the real value behind our products. These lessons collectively inform how we engage with our global customers—building a brand that stands for quality, trust, and innovation.

How do you position Sri Lankan-made products for credibility and competitiveness in global markets?

Sri Lanka has emerged as a global leader in the solid tyre industry, known for its high-quality manufacturing, technical expertise, and innovation. At BGN Industrial Tyre, we take pride in being part of this success story by producing tyres that not only meet but often exceed stringent international standards.

Our products benefit from decades of Sri Lanka's specialization in solid tyres, a niche where the country has built a strong reputation for durability, reliability, and performance. This heritage, combined with continuous investment in research and development, enables us to deliver solutions tailored to the most demanding industrial applications worldwide.

We back our quality claims with internationally recognized certifications like ISO, which are essential to building trust with global buyers. Beyond certifications, transparency and ethical practices in manufacturing further enhance Sri Lanka's image as a responsible and reliable supplier.

By consistently delivering high-performance tyres, we help position Sri Lanka not just as a supplier, but as a benchmark for excellence in the solid tyre sector globally. Our commitment to innovation and customer-centricity continues to drive this leadership, making Sri Lankan solid tyres a preferred choice for industries around the world.

What marketing channels or approaches do you find most effective today in the solid tyre industry?

In today's market, a multichannel approach is essential to reach and engage our customers effectively. Digital platforms like LinkedIn and industry-specific forums enable us to connect directly with decision-makers and influencers, building awareness and generating qualified leads.

Trade exhibitions and global industry fairs play a vital role in our marketing strategy. These events provide an invaluable opportunity to showcase our latest products, demonstrate innovations, network with OEMs, distributors, and key industry players, and stay abreast of emerging trends.

Long-term OEM partnerships are another crucial channel, creating sustained demand and strengthening brand association through trusted collaborations.

Additionally, our in-field technical support teams provide hands-on assistance post-sale, which not only enhances customer satisfaction but also reinforces our reputation in an industry where trust and reliability are critical.

Together, these channels ensure we maintain strong market presence and close engagement with our customers worldwide.

How do you balance short-term sales targets with long-term brand building?

Balancing immediate sales goals with long-term brand equity requires a clear, dual-focused strategy. We set quarterly revenue targets to drive business performance and ensure operational focus, while simultaneously investing in initiatives that build our brand's reputation over time. This includes delivering consistent product quality, exceptional after-sales service, and participating in industry forums where we can establish thought leadership. Brand building is also supported through transparent communication and customer engagement, which fosters loyalty and repeat business. The key is to ensure that short-term efforts don't undermine long-term trust; instead, they should complement and reinforce it.

What advice would you give to Sri Lankan manufacturers seeking to establish a global brand identity?

My advice to Sri Lankan manufacturers is to focus relentlessly on quality and consistency, as these are the true foundations of any successful global brand. Continuous investment in research and development is essential to innovate and stay ahead of evolving market demands.

While certifications can support credibility, the real differentiator is how you deliver genuine value to your customers through reliable products and services. Authentic, data-driven storytelling that explains not just what you make but why it matters helps build meaningful connections with your audience.

Remember, a global brand isn't built solely through marketing campaigns; it's shaped by every interaction with your customers—from the first inquiry to ongoing post-sale support. By maintaining consistency, transparency, and excellence at every touchpoint, Sri Lankan manufacturers can build strong, trustworthy brands that stand out on the international stage.

What role does digital transformation play in your current operational model?

Digital transformation plays a significant and transformative role in how we operate at BGN Industrial Tyre. From predictive maintenance systems that help reduce unplanned downtime to Customer Relationship Management (CRM) platforms that provide deep customer insights, digital tools enable us to be more agile, efficient, and customer-focused. By integrating data analytics into our decision-making, we can anticipate issues before they arise, optimize resource allocation, and tailor our services to meet customer needs more effectively.

How do you foster a culture of continuous improvement across departments?

We foster continuous improvement by encouraging open communication and idea-sharing at all levels of the organization. Employees are empowered to identify opportunities to enhance processes and efficiency. We recognize and reward teams and individuals who contribute meaningful improvements, creating motivation and accountability.

Regular cross-departmental workshops and training sessions help share best practices and build collective knowledge. We also track the progress and impact of improvement initiatives to ensure sustained results. This approach builds a strong sense of ownership and a mindset focused on constantly finding better ways to operate.

Can you share your approach to cross-functional collaboration among Sales, HR, IT, and Manufacturing?

Cross-functional collaboration is driven by transparency and shared objectives. We establish common KPIs that align the goals of Sales, HR, IT, and Operations, ensuring everyone is working toward the same outcomes. Regular synchronization meetings and collaborative digital tools facilitate open communication and rapid problem-solving. Aligned incentives motivate teams to support each other, breaking down silos and fostering a unified approach to business challenges.


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What lessons have you learned about managing change across large organizations?

Managing change effectively requires it to be inclusive and transparent. People need to understand the reasons behind change—the "why"—to embrace it fully. We prioritize clear communication at every stage, comprehensive training to build capabilities, and phased implementation to allow smooth adaptation. Involving employees early and addressing their concerns helps build trust and reduces resistance, making transformation sustainable.

What does business agility mean to you in a manufacturing context?

Business agility means the ability to quickly adapt production schedules, innovate processes, and realign teams in response to market dynamics or operational challenges—all without compromising safety or quality. It requires flexible systems, empowered teams, and a mindset that embraces change as an opportunity. Agility enables us to meet customer demands promptly and maintain competitiveness in a fast-evolving industry.

Having worked in sectors as diverse as automotive, medical, logistics, and now tyres—how has this shaped your leadership style?

Working across diverse sectors—from automotive to pharmaceuticals and logistics—has made me adaptive and deeply people-focused. Each industry taught me unique leadership lessons: precision and regulatory rigor in pharma, relentless customer obsession in automotive, and operational efficiency in logistics. These experiences have shaped a collaborative yet performance-driven style that values both the human and business sides of leadership.

What core values do you bring into every role you take on?

The core values I bring are integrity, continuous learning, accountability, and resilience. Integrity ensures transparency and trust in all dealings; continuous learning keeps me and my teams agile in a changing environment; accountability drives ownership of results; and resilience helps navigate setbacks with determination. These values underpin my strategic decisions and day-to-day interactions.

What mentors or experiences have had the most profound impact on your career?

I've been fortunate to learn from leaders who balance compassion with commercial acumen—those who lead with empathy but never lose sight of business goals. A pivotal milestone was leading international assignments where I had to build teams from scratch in diverse cultural settings. These experiences taught me the immense value of trust, cultural intelligence, and adaptability in effective leadership.

What's the most important decision you've made as a leader—and what did you learn from it?

One of the most important decisions I made was focusing on building a people-centric culture across our manufacturing units. This involved investing in talent development, fostering open communication, and empowering employees at all levels to take ownership of their work. By prioritizing people and creating an environment of trust and collaboration, we improved teamwork, boosted morale, and enhanced operational performance. From this experience, I learned that strong leadership is about inspiring and enabling your people, and that sustainable success comes from investing in the workforce as much as in technology or processes.


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What advice would you offer to young professionals entering the Sri Lankan manufacturing and export sector today?

My advice to young professionals is to embrace continuous learning and adaptability. The manufacturing and export sectors are evolving rapidly with technological advancements and shifting global demands. Building strong technical skills is essential, but equally important is developing a mindset open to innovation and change.

Focus on building cross-functional knowledge—understand not just your specialty but how it fits into the broader value chain. Seek mentors, be proactive in problem-solving, and never underestimate the power of strong communication and teamwork.

Lastly, cultivate a global perspective. Success in exports requires understanding international markets, cultures, and business practices. Stay curious, stay resilient, and always aim to add value beyond the obvious.

What excites you most about the future of the Sri Lankan manufacturing sector?

I'm excited by the growing recognition of Sri Lanka as a reliable and quality-driven manufacturing hub. There is increasing investment in advanced manufacturing technologies, sustainability, and skill development, which will elevate our competitiveness globally.

The sector's ability to innovate while leveraging Sri Lanka's strategic location and trade agreements opens new opportunities for export growth. The passion and resilience of our workforce also give me confidence that we will continue to evolve and thrive in a dynamic global landscape.

How do you envision Richard Pieris evolving in the next 5 years under your leadership?

Over the next five years, I envision Richard Pieris expanding its footprint as a global leader in tyre manufacturing and rubber products, driven by innovation, operational excellence, and sustainability.

We will deepen our presence in key international markets, introduce new product lines tailored to emerging industrial needs, and continue investing in talent development and technology. Sustainability will remain a cornerstone as we embed greener practices into every aspect of our operations.

Ultimately, we aim to build a future-ready, agile organization that consistently delivers value to customers, shareholders, and communities.

What external trends—economic, technological, or environmental—do you think will shape your industry the most?

Several trends will shape our industry significantly:

- Economic shifts such as global supply chain realignments and trade policy changes will influence sourcing and market access.
- Technological advancements in materials science, manufacturing automation, and digital analytics will drive efficiency and product innovation.
- Environmental concerns and regulatory pressures will accelerate the adoption of sustainable materials and cleaner production processes.

Adapting proactively to these trends will be critical for maintaining competitiveness and meeting evolving customer expectations.

Are there emerging technologies or global shifts you are actively preparing your operations for?

Yes, we are closely monitoring and gradually adopting advanced manufacturing technologies such as automation and data analytics to improve precision and efficiency. We are also preparing for the increasing demand for sustainable materials and eco-friendly manufacturing processes, aligning with global environmental standards and customer preferences. Furthermore, we are strengthening our supply chain resilience to navigate geopolitical uncertainties and logistics challenges, ensuring uninterrupted operations.

If you had to leave one message to your peers in the industry, what would it be?

My message to peers is this: Embrace change as an opportunity, not a threat. The manufacturing landscape is evolving rapidly, and success depends on agility, innovation, and a people-first approach. Invest in your teams, prioritize sustainability, and foster collaboration across the industry. Together, we can build a stronger, more resilient Sri Lankan manufacturing sector that competes confidently on the global stage.

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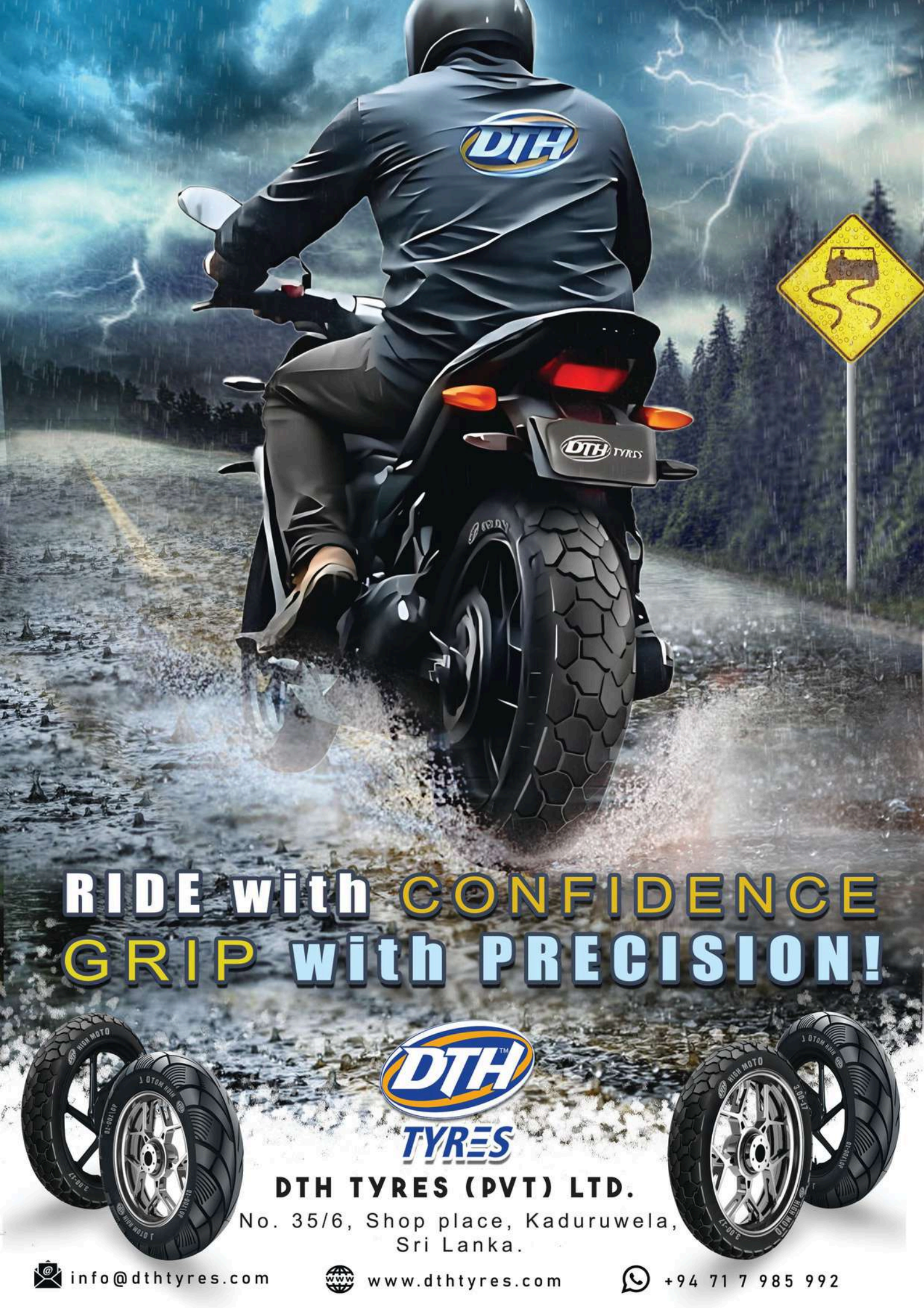
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RUBBER Review

Issue 7 | June 24, 2025

IRMRI Spotlight

INDIAN RUBBER MATERIALS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Formerly known as Indian Rubber Manufactures Research Association(IRMRA)

An Autonomous Institute, Under DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Govt. of India
254/1B Road No 16V, Wagle Industrial Estate, Thane West, Maharashtra 400604.
Email: info@irmra.org /www.irmri.org/022 6787 3200 (19 Lines)

Indian Rubber Materials Research Institute (IRMRI) formerly known as Indian Rubber Manufacturers Research Association (IRMRA), which was established in 1958 is an internationally well-known Centre of Excellence for providing technological services to both Non-tyre & Tyre sectors.

It is an autonomous institute under the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Govt. of India.

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8. Third Party Inspection
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East Centre Head

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Sr. Officer (Maintenance & Safety)

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Jr. Officer (ESTT)

Hemant Khairnar
Asst. Finance Officer

Anil Bhujbal
Jr. Officer

IRMRI, Receives the Prestigious K.M. Philip Gold Medal Award 2025

The Indian Rubber Materials Research Institute (IRMRI) is proud to announce that it has been conferred with the K.M. Philip Gold Medal Award 2025—a recognition of excellence that highlights IRMRI's unwavering commitment to research, innovation, and sustainable advancement in the rubber and allied materials sector.

This distinguished honour, awarded under the aegis of the All India Rubber Industries Association (AIRIA), stands as a testament to IRMRI's transformative contributions to the Indian rubber ecosystem under the visionary leadership of Dr. K. Rajkumar, Director, IRMRI. The institute's integrated efforts in cutting-edge research, technology development, and industry empowerment have been pivotal in shaping a resilient, forward-looking rubber industry.

Inspired by the enduring legacy and foresight of Shri K.M. Philip, a stalwart of India's rubber sector, IRMRI renews its mission to:

- Foster deeper industry-academia collaboration for practical innovation
- Support and scale Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) across the value chain
- Accelerate skill development and indigenous technology for self-reliance
- Contribute meaningfully to the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, driving India toward global competitiveness

The K.M. Philip Gold Medal is more than just an accolade—it symbolizes trust in IRMRI's journey towards building a sustainable, inclusive, and innovation-driven rubber industry. As India strides ahead with ambition and purpose, IRMRI remains committed to being a catalyst for transformation and excellence.

Internship Program at Delhi Office

IRMRI Delhi Office is delighted to welcome two talented second-year students from Delhi University's B.Com (Hon.) and Economics (Hon.) programs for a one-month internship during June–July 2025. The internship will take place at IRMRI-Delhi, located at Prop. No. 111/9, 3rd Floor, Kishangarh, Vasant Kunj, Delhi. This experience will be instrumental in honing their Marketing and Business Development along with other Administrative skills, equipping them with valuable insights for future professional challenges.

Internship Program at East CentreDelhi Office

IRMRI East Centre is happy to host three (3) students of 1st year M.Sc course on Paint & Coating Technology from Center for Interdisciplinary Sciences, JIS INSTITUTE OF ADAVANCED STUDY AND RESEARCH (JISIASR KOLKATA) JIS School of Medical Science and Research Campus, for carrying out a one month **internship** during June - July 2025 at **IRMRI- East Centre**, situated at Dhulagarh, Howrah. Dr. Debdipta Basu, Sr. Assistant Director and Centre Head is supervising them for an internship project on Rubber compounding and testing. This opportunity will significantly enhance their **technical skills** and prepare them for future challenges in the field. Wishing them great success in their project and future endeavours!

INDIAN RUBBER MATERIALS RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Formerly Known as INDIAN RUBBER MANUFACTURERS RESEARCH ASSOCIATION (IRMRA)
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- Role of Physical & Chemical Testing in Benchmarking & Formula Reconstruction of Rubber Products
- Dynamic Mechanical Testing of Rubber Products

VENUE

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CONTACT US

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Disclaimer: Please note, that the date and venue for the training program are subject to change. In the event of any changes, we will notify you at least 7 working days prior to the scheduled date

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Date: July 24 - 25, 2025
Time : 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Venue: IRMRI EC, Dhulagarh

What to learn ?

- Basic Rubber Technology – Structure & property relationship, applications
- Role of compounding ingredients in designing of rubber compounds
- Physical & Chemical Testing of rubber compounds & products
- Dynamic Mechanical Analysis of Rubber
- Global Regulatory Compliances of Rubber Products
- Practical Demonstration of some physical and chemical tests

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- Process Engineers , Chemists, Students & Faculties
- Supervisors, Shop-floor operators, Formulation developers

Course Material : All Participants will be forwarded pdf copy of Course Materials

Certification : All Participants will be awarded with a Certificate of Participation

Registration Fee:

- Rs. 8000 + 18% GST
- *Discount: 10% for IRMRI Members and 2 candidates from same organization*
  15% for 3 or more candidates from same organization
- *Special discount: 10% for students/faculties from academic inst. and self-sponsored candidates*

For Registration:

Dr. Debdipta Basu, db@irmra.org, Mobile - +91 8291404819
Mr. Sibasish Chowlay, training.ec@irmra.org , Mobile - +91 8910436613.

INDIAN RUBBER MATERIALS RESEARCH INSTITUTE – EAST CENTRE

(Under DPIIT, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Govt. of India)

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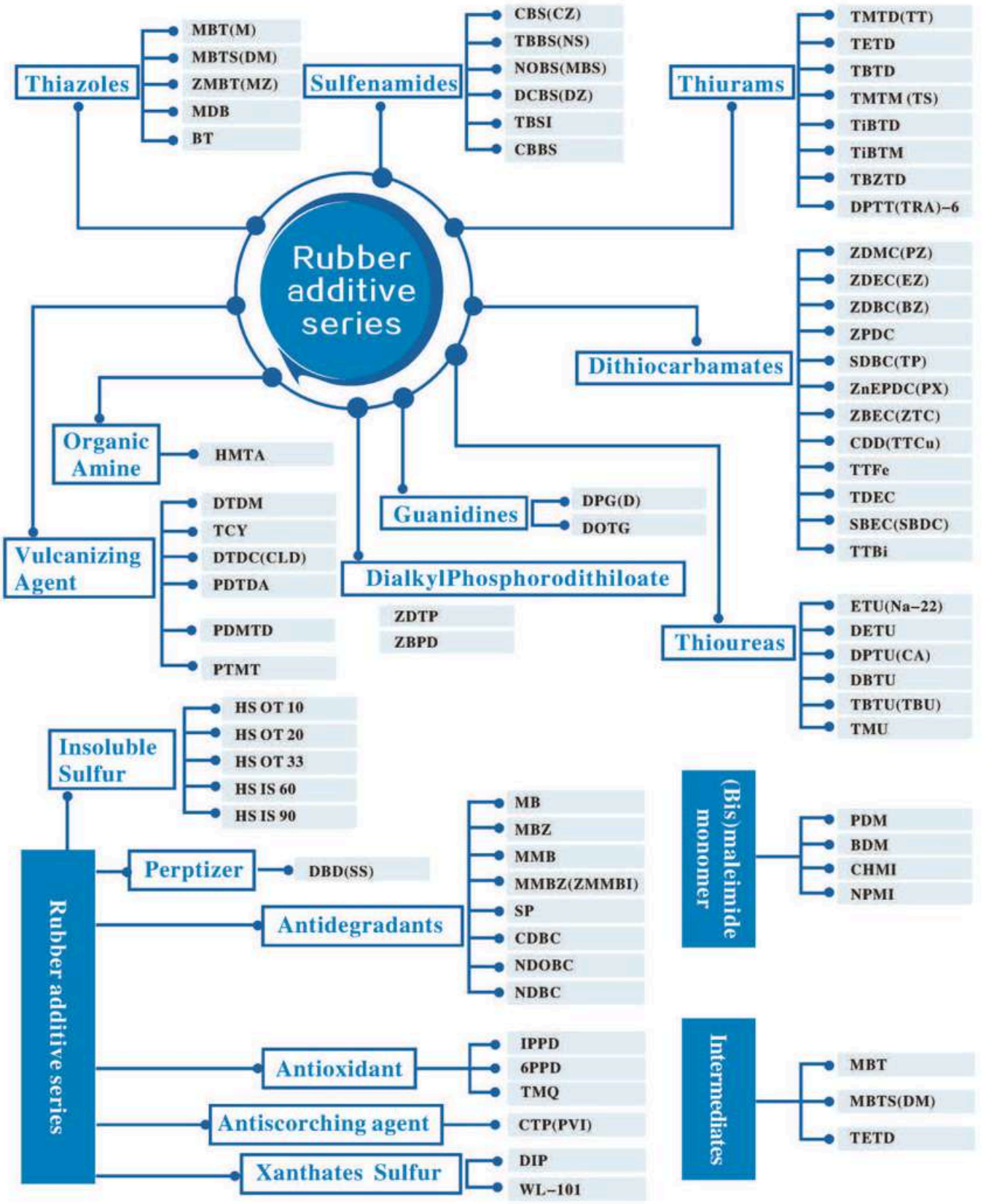

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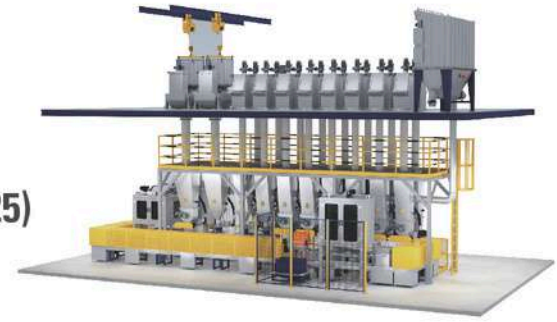

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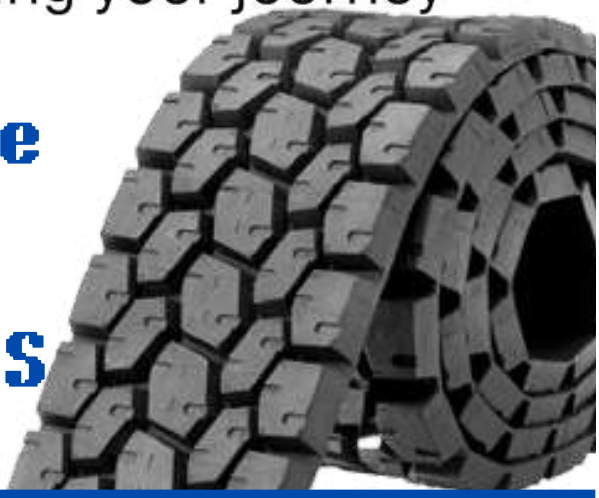

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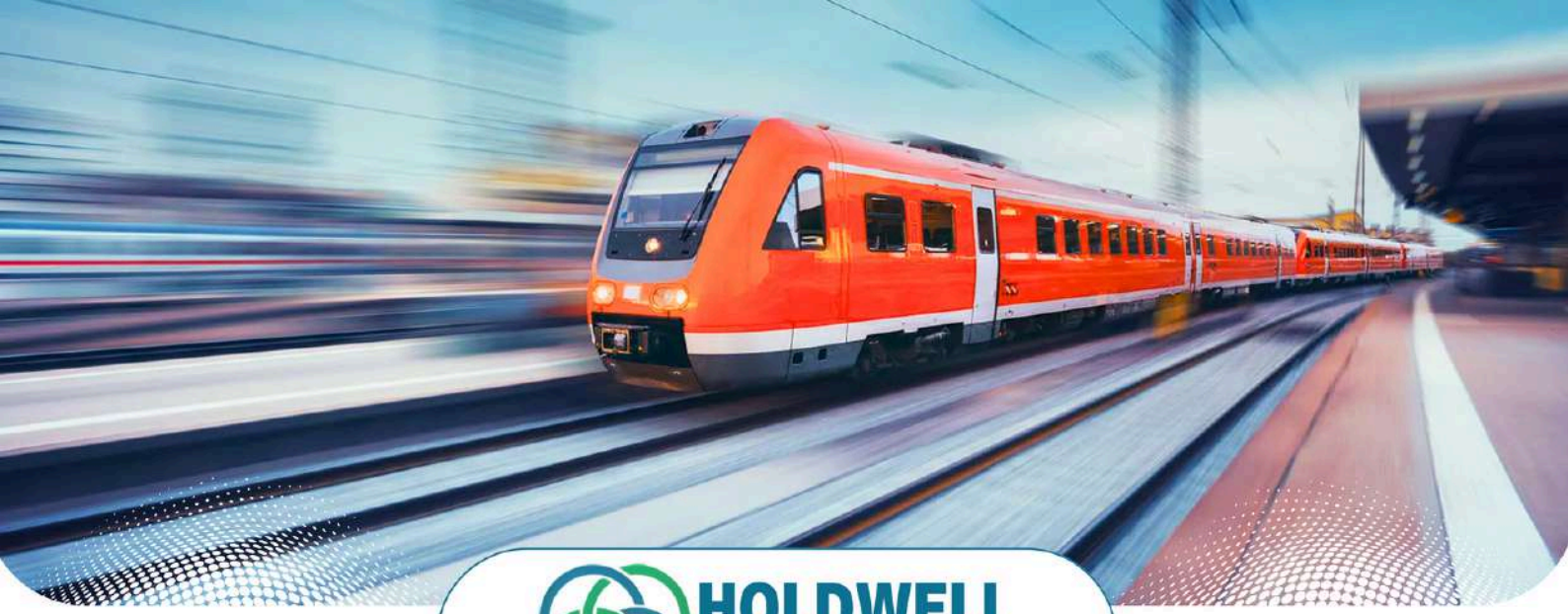

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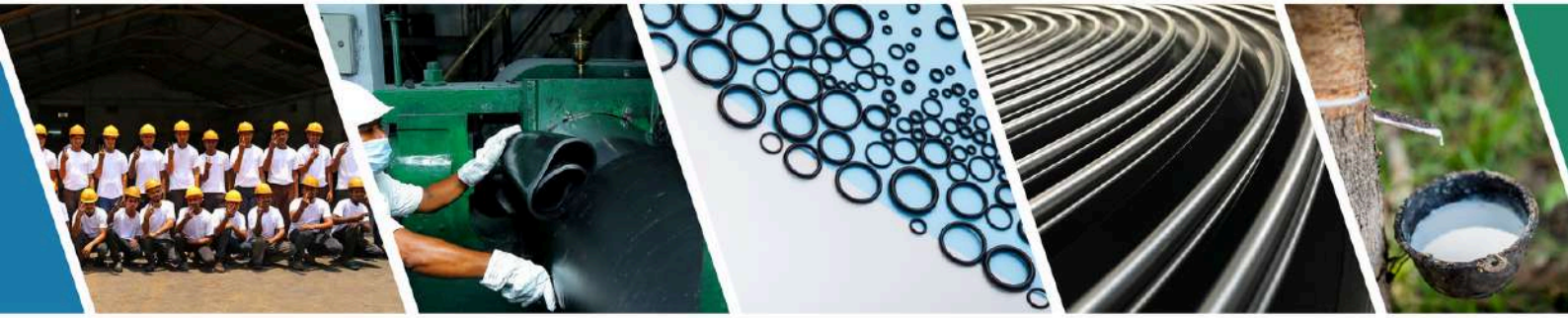

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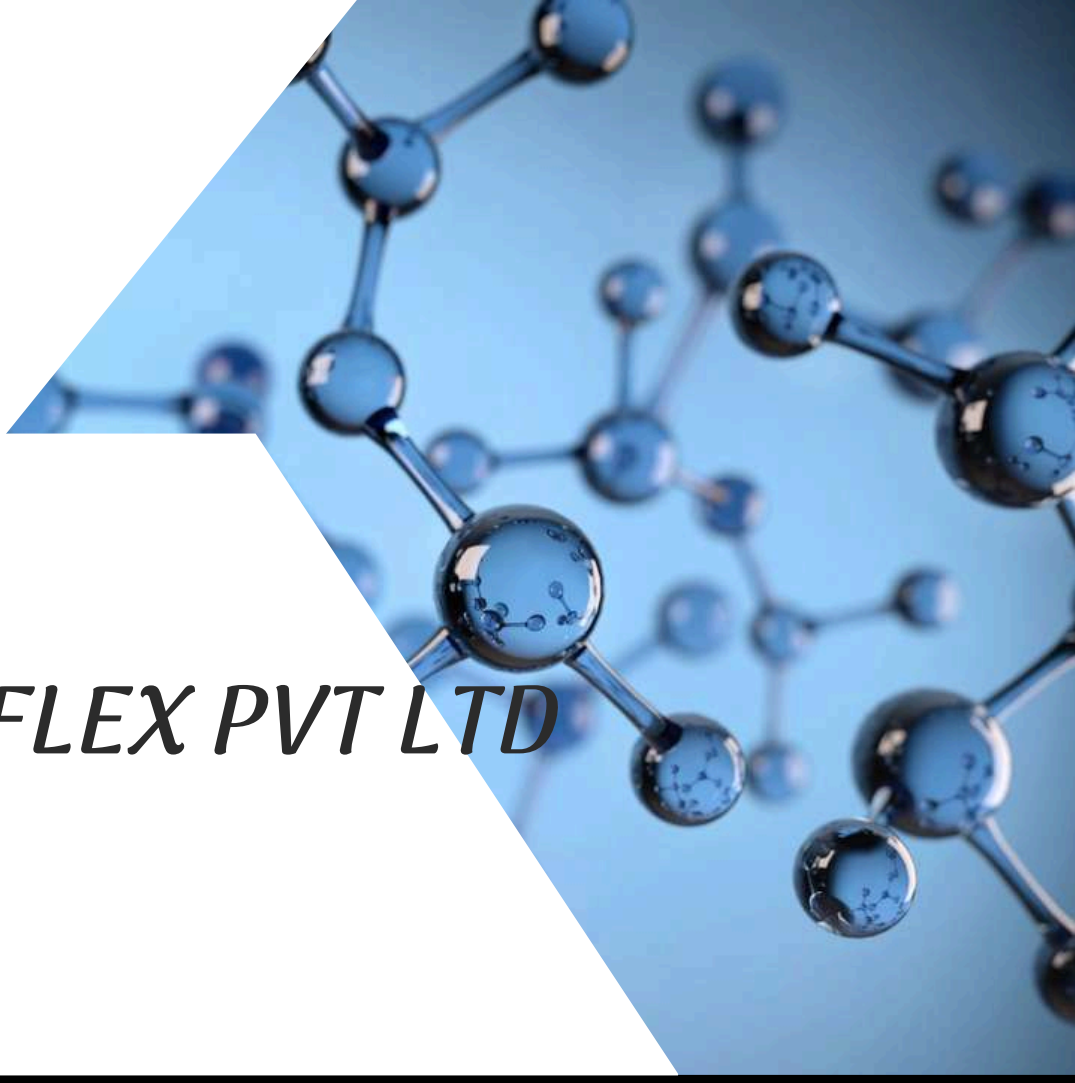

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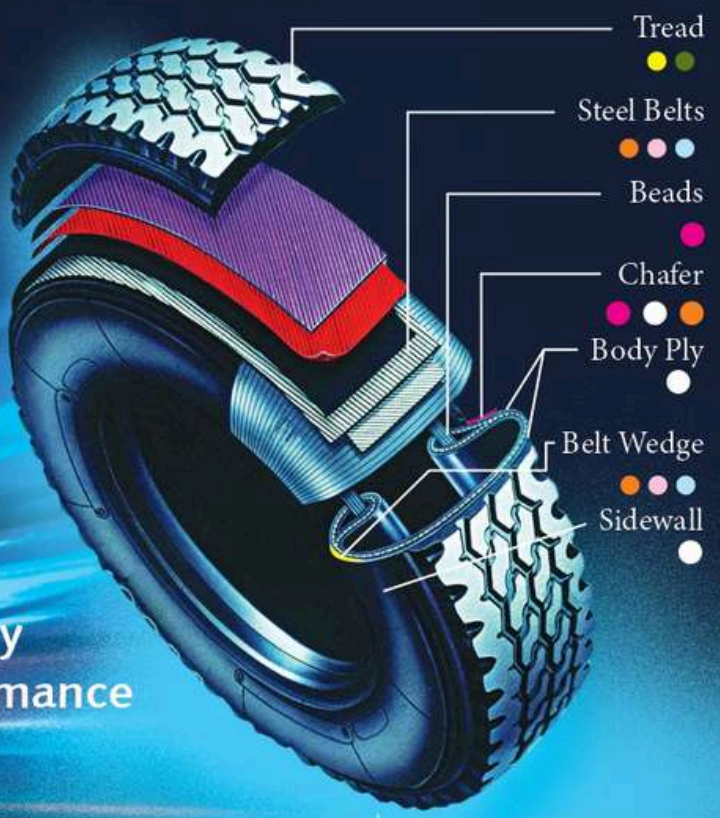

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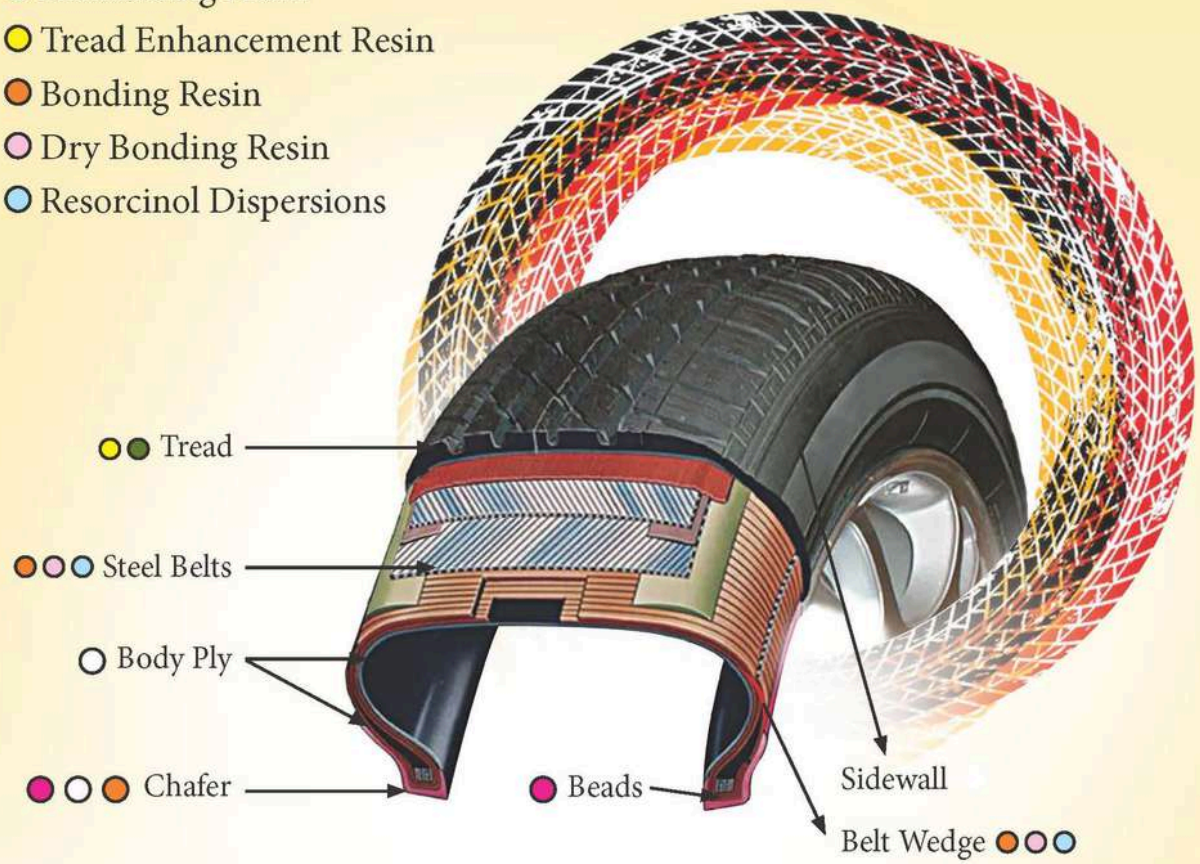

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RUBBER BUSINESS NEWS

RUBBER Review

Shimadzu Scientific Instruments introduces the Autograph AGS-V compact tabletop materials testing machines

Shimadzu Scientific Instruments (SSI) introduces the AUTOGRAPH AGS-V Series tabletop precision universal testing machines. Featuring a wide selection of load cell capacities, versatile control options and compatible accessories, the AGS-V Series delivers dependable testing of diverse material types.

Available in seven different models, the AGS-V Series supports load capacities from 1 newton to 10 kilonewtons, making it ideal for delicate samples and high-force testing applications. It also accommodates a wide test speed range of 0.0005 to 1500 mm/min, providing greater adaptability for various test conditions. An improved crosshead return speed of 1650 mm/min helps reduce test cycle times and boost lab productivity.

Expandable frame options are available to handle materials that undergo deformation, such as rubber and plastics. Users can increase both the testing stroke and main unit height with +250 mm and +500 mm extensions, enabling reliable tests to failure on highly elastic or stretchable materials.

With a high-speed data sampling rate of 0.2 milliseconds, AGS-V Series instruments precisely capture rapid or subtle changes in force during testing. They also offer test force accuracy down to 1/1000 of the load cell capacity, improving data reliability, particularly during the initial rise in test force. This precision reduces the need for frequent load cell changes, simplifying setup and saving time.

To further expand testing capabilities, the AGS-V Series is compatible with a comprehensive lineup of accessories, including pneumatic flat grips, a selection of extensometers and atmosphere test devices.

The AGS-V Series is powered by TRAPEZIUMX-V software, known for its intuitive interface, including a Method Wizard that guides users through test setup.

Additional software options include:

- Single software for standard tensile, compression, bending and peeling tests
- Cyclic software for durability testing involving repeated loading patterns
- Control software for creating custom test operation sequences
- Texture software for evaluating the properties of food and pharmaceutical products
- Spring software for specialized testing of spring performance.

A rule-breaking, colorful silicone that could conduct electricity

A newly discovered silicone variant is a semiconductor, University of Michigan researchers have discovered—upending assumptions that the material class is exclusively insulating.

"T*he material opens up the opportunity for new types of flat panel displays, flexible photovoltaics, wearable sensors or even clothing that can display different patterns or images*," said Richard Laine, U-M professor of materials science and engineering and macromolecular science and engineering and corresponding author of the study recently published in Macromolecular Rapid Communications.

Silicone oils and rubbers—polysiloxanes and silsesquioxanes—are traditionally insulating materials, meaning they resist the flow of electricity or heat. Their water-resistant properties make them useful in biomedical devices, sealants, electronic coatings and more.

Meanwhile, conventional semiconductors are typically rigid. Semiconducting silicone has the potential to enable the flexible electronics Laine described as well as silicone that comes in a variety of colors.

On a molecular level, silicones are made up of a backbone of alternating silicon and oxygen atoms (Si—O—Si) with organic (carbon-based) groups attached to the silicon. Various 3D formations of polymer chains arise as they connect to one another, known as cross-linking, which alter the material's physical properties like strength or solubility.

While studying different cross-linking structures in silicone, the research team stumbled upon the potential for electrical conductivity in a copolymer, which is a polymer chain containing two different types of repeating units—cage-structured and then linear silicones in this case.

The possibility for conductivity arises from the way electrons can move across Si—O—Si bonds with overlapping orbitals. Semiconductors have two main states: the ground state, which doesn't conduct electricity, and a conducting state, which does. The conducting state, also known as an excited state, occurs when some electrons jump up to the next electron orbital, which is connected across the material like a metal.

Typically, Si—O—Si bond angles don't allow for that connection. At 110°, they are a long way from a 180° straight line. But in the silicone copolymer the team discovered, these bonds started out at 140° in the ground state—and they stretch to 150° in the excited state. This was enough to create a highway for electrical charge to flow.

"This allows an unexpected interaction between electrons across multiple bonds including Si—O—Si bonds in these copolymers," Laine said. "The longer the chain length, the easier it is for electrons to travel longer distances, reducing the energy needed to absorb light and then emit it at lower energies."

The semiconducting properties of the silicone copolymers also enable its spectrum of colors. Electrons jump between the ground and excited states by absorbing and emitting photons, or particles of light. The light emission depends on the length of the copolymer chain, which Laine's team can control. Longer chain lengths mean smaller jumps and lower energy photons, giving the silicone a red tint. Shorter chains require bigger jumps from the electrons, so they emit higher energy light toward the blue end of the spectrum.

To demonstrate the connection between chain length and light absorption and emission, the researchers separated copolymers with different chain lengths and arranged them in test tubes from long to short. Shining a UV light on the tubes creates a full rainbow as each absorbs and emits the light at different energies.

The colorful array based on copolymer chain length is particularly unique because up to this point, silicones have only been known to be transparent or white because their insulating properties make them unable to absorb much light.

"We're taking a material everyone thought was electrically inert and giving it a new life—one that could power the next generation of soft, flexible electronics," said Zijing (Jackie) Zhang, U-M doctoral student of materials science and engineering and lead author of the study.

The research was funded by the U.S. National Science Foundation (2103628) and the Thailand National Science, Research and Innovation Fund (NSRF) via the Program Management Unit for Human Resources & Institutional Development, Research and Innovation (B16F640099).

ARPM releases MO-1: Rubber Handbook, revised 2025 Edition

The Association for Rubber Products Manufacturers (ARPM) announced the release of the newly revised MO-1: The Rubber Handbook, the latest edition of the rubber industry's most trusted engineering reference tool. Updated every five years, the Rubber Handbook remains the gold standard for communicating specifications across the rubber manufacturing supply chain.

Thoroughly reviewed by a team of dedicated, expert volunteers, the 2025 revision brings the handbook in line with current ISO and ANSI standards and reflects the evolving needs of engineers, designers, and quality professionals in the rubber industry.

This essential resource provides a standardized "language" in the form of symbols, charts, and definitions – helping engineers specify what they need clearly and efficiently, without over or under engineering components. The new edition expands on this foundation with updated charts and definitions for five primary product groups: molded, extruded, lathe-cut, cellular, and now calendered rubber parts.

In addition to product-specific chapters, a comprehensive section on quality conformance outlines practical approaches for ensuring that rubber products meet design requirements. A newly added rubber materials selection guide, complied by industry experts, enhances the Handbook's value as a daily engineering and procurement tool.

Greg Vassmer, Chair of the MO-1 Handbook Review Committee, shared, "The ARPM Rubber Handbook continues to be the primary reference used by rubber product suppliers and customers to understand and communicate engineering and quality conformance specifications. The specifications are used on drawings and in quality documentation, providing a common language for five different rubber product groups. With this edition, entirely new sections have been added covering calendered rubber products and a selection guide for rubber materials compiled from experts industry-wide. The new sections, along with updated tables, makes the new edition a necessary and valuable resource."

To obtain a copy of the MO-1: Rubber Handbook, please visit www.arpminc.com/publications. Current ARPM Members can download the publication at no cost.

Black Donuts Launches a New Material Research Center – InTire Labs

Black Donuts Inc. has announced the launch of InTire Labs, a new independent material research center located in Tampere, Finland. The facility, officially open on July 16, 2025, is designed to accelerate the development of sustainable tire and rubber materials. It will serve as a neutral and confidential platform for research and development, supporting tire manufacturers, rubber product producers, and raw material suppliers worldwide.

InTire Labs will offer a comprehensive suite of services, including rubber compounding and recipe development, reverse engineering of rubber compounds, physical and chemical testing, and pilot-scale processing such as mixing, milling, pressing, and curing. A key focus of the lab will be the development of bio-based, recycled, and next-generation materials, helping the industry transition away from traditional fossil-based compounds like petroleum-derived synthetic rubber.

The facility spans 700 square meters and is equipped with state-of-the-art machinery and digital infrastructure. This setup enables precise formulation control, real-time data collection, and full traceability, which are essential for meeting stringent environmental regulations and ESG (Environmental, Social, and Governance) commitments.

According to Black Donuts CEO Kai Hauvala, the tire industry urgently needs dedicated infrastructure to meet rising sustainability targets. InTire Labs is intended to fill that gap by providing a high-performance, independent testing environment. Ilkka Lehtoranta, Head of Tire and Material Development at Black Donuts, emphasized that the lab will empower clients to meet their sustainability goals through both individual material tests and full-scale compound innovation.

In addition to its technical capabilities, InTire Labs is designed to foster collaboration across the industry. It will serve as a platform for joint research, testing, and analysis, offering opportunities for both large corporations and small-to-medium enterprises to access high-quality research tools and accelerate their innovation cycles.

The launch of InTire Labs is partially funded by the European Union's NextGenerationEU initiative, highlighting its alignment with broader European goals for green innovation and sustainable industrial development.

Greene Tweed proves sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) compatibility with elastomer seals

Ahead of the Paris Air Show, Greene Tweed has released results from a study confirming the compatibility of its fluorine-based elastomer seals with Sustainable Aviation Fuels (SAF). The results provide critical insights for aerospace leaders transitioning to sustainable, low-emission fuels, while ensuring safety and reliability.

As the aerospace industry focuses on decarbonization, SAFs offer substantial CO2 reductions of over 65% compared to traditional jet fuels. Nevertheless, challenges like seal compatibility remain. To address this, Greene Tweed conducted rigorous testing to ensure its seals perform effectively with these advanced fuels.

"*Sustainable aviation fuels offer a practical path to reducing emissions, particularly for long-haul flights, where batteries and hydrogen remain less feasible,*" said Shawn McCloskey, Greene Tweed Chief Commercial Officer. "Our study ensures aerospace customers have reliable seal solutions for SAF adoption without compromising safety or performance."

Greene Tweed collaborated with multiple suppliers to evaluate SAF blends and their effects on the physical properties of fluorine-based elastomers FKM and FVMQ. The study assessed performance in SAF blends, including Synthetic Paraffinic Kerosene (SPK) and Synthetic Aromatic Kerosene (SAK), following ASTM D7566 standards. Testing simulated extreme aerospace environments, including temperatures up to 120°C and prolonged SAF exposure.

Key findings from the study include:

- Consistent Performance: FKM compounds (731, 772, 665) maintained performance across blends, including three SPKs, 50/50 blends with control fluid, and 20% SAK with 80% SPKs.
- Material Properties: FKM elastomers showed strong compatibility with harsh SAF conditions, including fluid aging and dry-out scenarios.
- Aromatic Content Impact: Aromatic content in SAF formulations, particularly SAK blends, is critical for maintaining material performance.
- Advanced Testing Protocols: Testing under accelerated aging conditions confirmed long-term reliability.

"By analyzing the effects of chemical interactions between SAF blends and advanced elastomers, we have developed a robust data set that established long-term reliability and compatibility in extreme aerospace conditions," noted Ronald Campbell, PhD, Senior Technical Advisor. As the aviation industry works toward carbon-neutral growth, with U.S. airlines targeting a 50% CO2 reduction by 2050, SAFs are vital. Greene Tweed's findings support these goals, ensuring component compatibility with SAF while maintaining safety and operational performance. These results were highlighted in a recent Aviation Week webinar, where Greene Tweed detailed its testing process. Representatives will also discuss these solutions at the Paris Air Show 2025.

Prism Worldwide announces three industry-first breakthroughs for recycled rubber materials

Prism Worldwide announced a trio of groundbreaking innovations poised to transform the recycling and sustainable materials industries. The company has made key advancements in odor reduction, sustainable thermoplastic vulcanizates (TPV) development, and high-content Ethylene Propylene Diene Monomer (EPDM) reuse, three challenges long considered barriers to wider adoption of recycled materials in consumer and industrial products. All of Prism's American-made materials are developed using non-capital-intensive processes that deliver lower costs compared to virgin materials, an especially relevant advantage in light of tariff uncertainties and the growing emphasis on domestic sourcing. This enables customers to achieve sustainability goals without increased cost, a particularly appealing value proposition in the industry.

"This is a turning point for end-of-life tire recycling and sustainable polymer development," said Bob Abramowitz, CEO, Prism Worldwide. "These are not incremental improvements. We've tackled odor, cost, and performance, three of the biggest barriers to more widespread adoption of recycled materials, and overcome them all with commercially viable solutions. Our team's diligence in developing solutions that solve these challenges allows us to deliver cost-effective, high-performance materials without requiring customers to pay a green premium. Companies pay lip service to sustainability values, but they change their tune when it costs more. We are creating additional profit opportunities while helping them to meet corporate sustainability objectives."

Today, customers can use Prism materials without changing the manufacturing process. These step changes introduce new ways to use up to 50% of recycled end-of-life tire materials in injection or rotational molding and extruding, a significant increase from what was previously possible. This opens new processes that were formerly limited to compression molding and enables companies to offer products such as gym mats and automotive interiors that are made using recycled materials but no longer produce unpleasant odors, a key customer benefit. Three Breakthroughs, One Industry Shift. Prism's new technology suite includes: Odor-Reduced Tire Materials: Prism's proprietary odor-reduction process resolves one of the most persistent issues in rubber recycling. Historically, strong and lingering odors have limited the use of recycled tire materials in indoor environments. Now, thanks to the company's innovation, validated in an independent lab to automotive-grade odor panel testing and VOC requirements, its materials meet the requirements for automotive interiors, consumer products, building materials, and other odor-sensitive applications.

Sustainable TPV from End-of-Life Tires: In an industry first, Prism has developed a patent-pending sustainable TPV where the rubber portion is derived from end-of-life tire materials. Prism's technology will allow TPV manufacturers to offer sustainable solutions in extremely valuable polymers.

High-Content Recycled EPDM: EPDM rubber is widely used in automotive weatherstripping and gaskets, roofing, and industrial applications, but it is difficult to recycle because it is crosslinked. Prism's patent-pending devulcanization process makes it possible to reuse EPDM at high content levels while delivering on key physical performance properties. This not only reduces material costs, but also significantly improves the sustainability profile of industries that rely on EPDM. With these breakthroughs, Prism is setting a new standard for what recycled materials can achieve. By solving problems that have limited adoption for decades, the company is making sustainability practical, profitable, and scalable.

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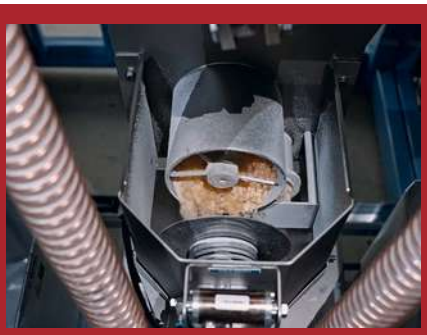

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Note: The Assessment fee of Rs.2000/- for RCPSDC course will be extra (*) During Registration, proof to be provided				* -- Lecture Notes hard copy Rs 2000/-(Inclusive GST) extra		

RCPSDC Certificate Courses:

IRI has signed MoU with RCPSDC and under this MoU, the candidates who have attended the above said on line classes (160 hours Theory classes min), they can get certificate from RCPSDC on various Job Roles & Qualification Packs (QPs) after due assessment by the certified Assessors of RCPSDC. However, they need to undergo practical training classes in Industry or any other Rubber Institute having practical training facilities of 200 Hrs min.

PI Note: Those who are working in Rubber Industries need not attend PRACTICAL Training (of 200 Hrs).

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Diploma /Graduate.	12thPass	12thPass	12thPass

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People working in Rubber & Allied Industries, final year students (Engineering Diploma/Science Graduate) from Colleges & Universities and Entrepreneurs. Those who do not have requisite qualification for the DIRI / PGD-IRI courses can directly join the class and will be assessed by RCPSDC for Job Role (s) / QPs as mentioned above, after registration with RCPSDC.

Fee Structure of RCPSDC courses are as Follows:

Sl. No	**Course**	**Fee (Rs)**	**GST @ 18% (Rs.)**	**Total (Rs)**
1 2	Course fee (without IRI Membership)	26,000.00	4,680.00	30,680.00
	Assessment fee per Qualification Pack	2,000.00	360.00	2,360.00
		26,500.00	4,940.00	**33,040.00**

Interested candidates are requested to contact the respective Regional IRI Branches. For IRI Branch details, please visit our website: www.iri.net.in

Training Coordinator: **Mr. Syed Mushtaq**, DBCOE, JSS Tech Institutions Campus, Mysuru - 570006
Ph. 0821-6731504, Mob. +91 9679283963, Email: iridbcoe.edu@gmail.com;
For any further details, please contact: Mr. Sasi D -HASETRI, Mysuru-570 016. Mob.9929199932
Mr. Harikrishna- DBCoE,Mysuru-570 006, Mob. 9916101050

NB: Please note that those who have requisite qualification like Diploma in Engg, Rubber Technology, Engineering Degree, B.Sc. & M.Sc only will be allowed to appear DIRI/PGD-IRI examinations.
However, other than above qualification can attend this course and will not be allowed to appear DIRI/ PGD-IRI examinations. They can appear for assessment by RCPSDC for different Job Roles/Qualification Packs mentioned above.

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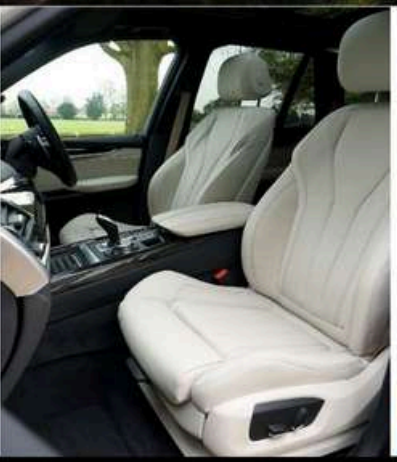

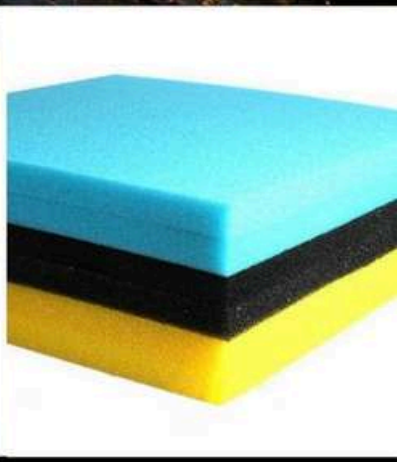

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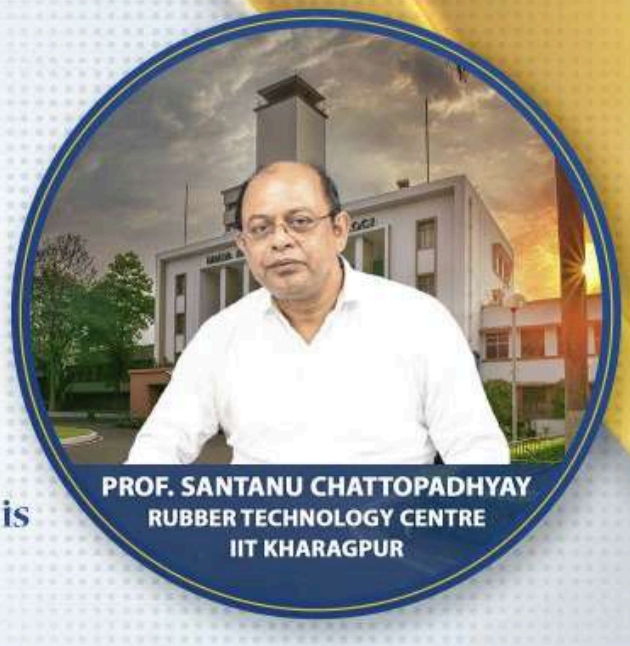

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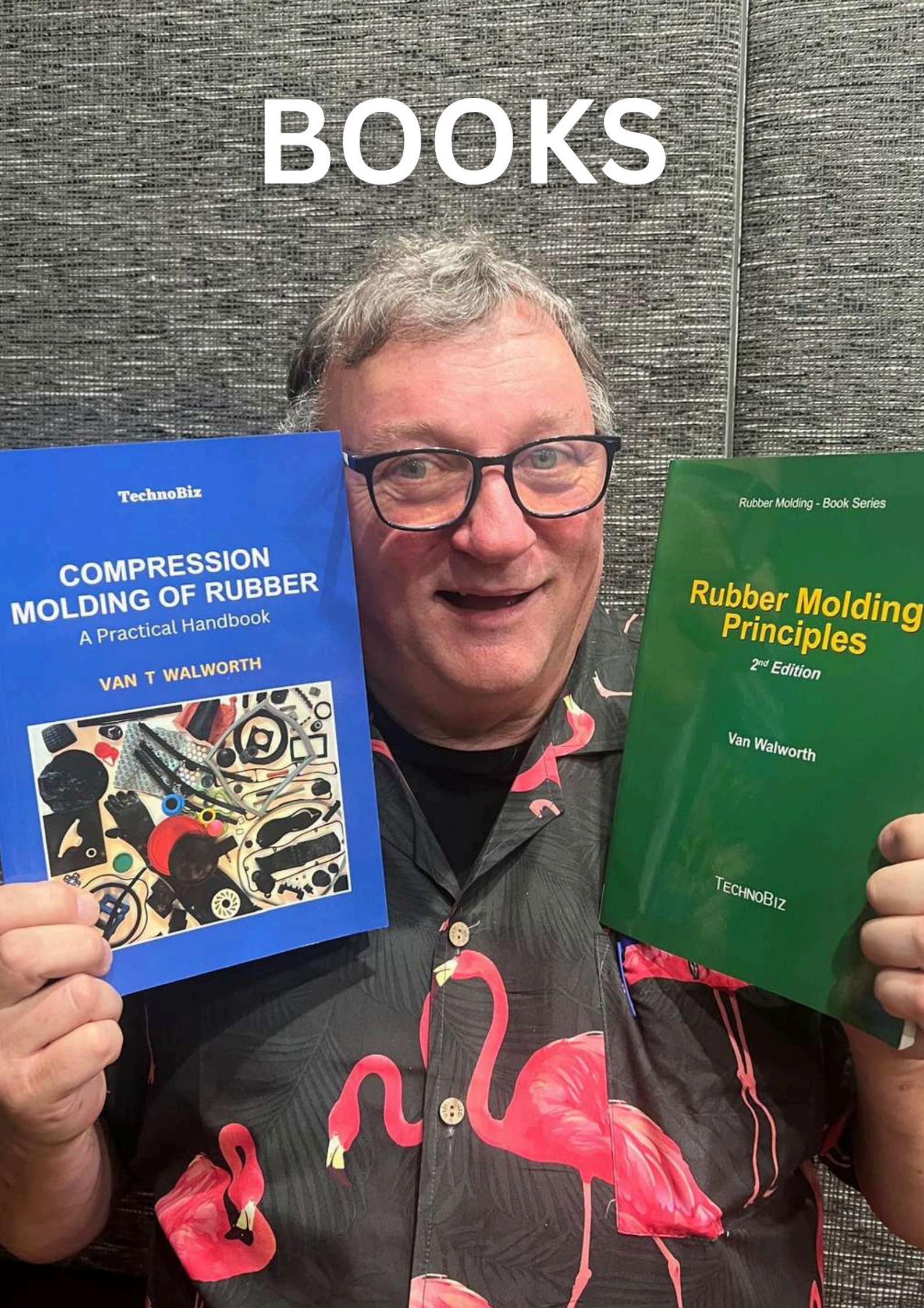
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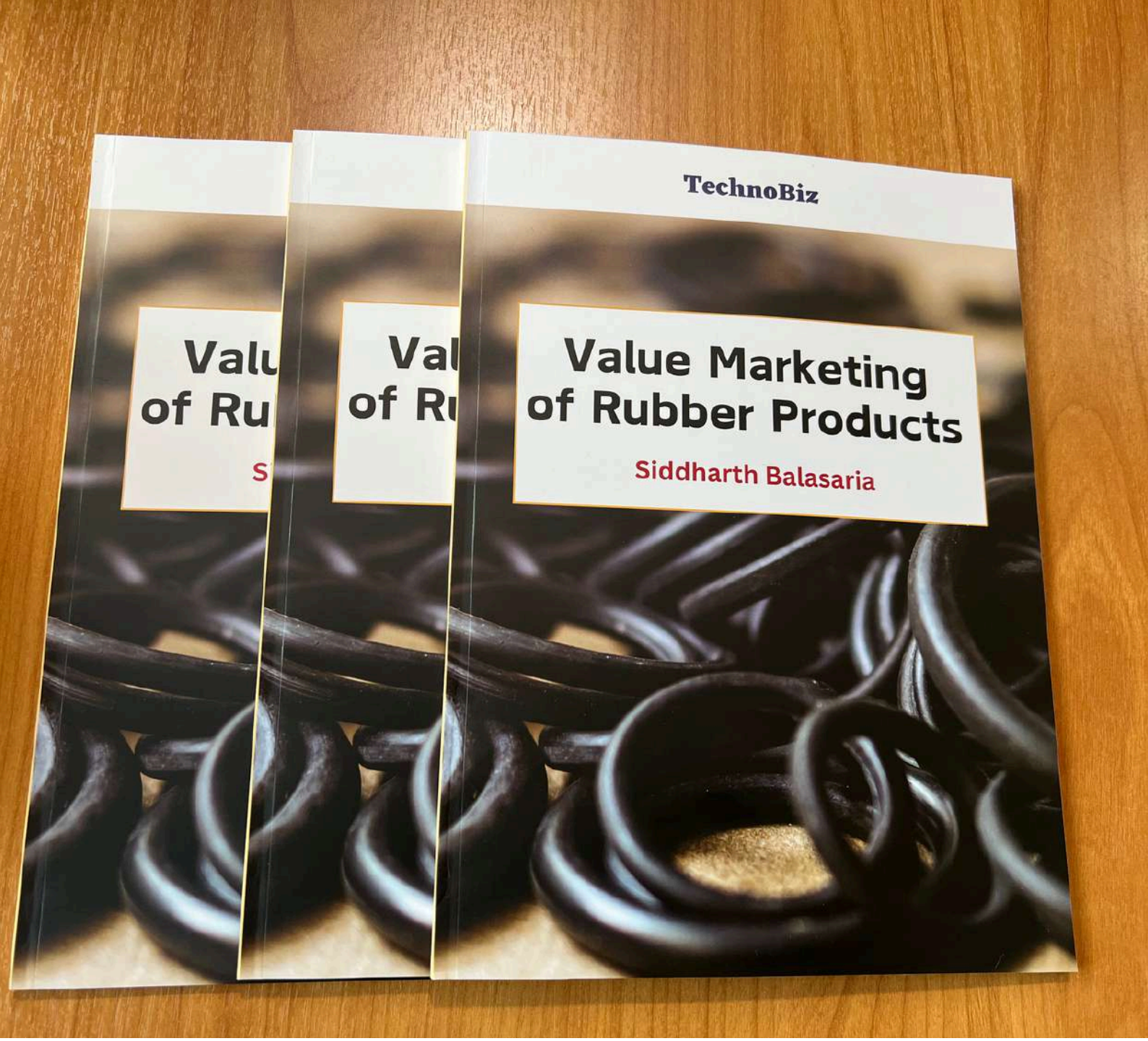

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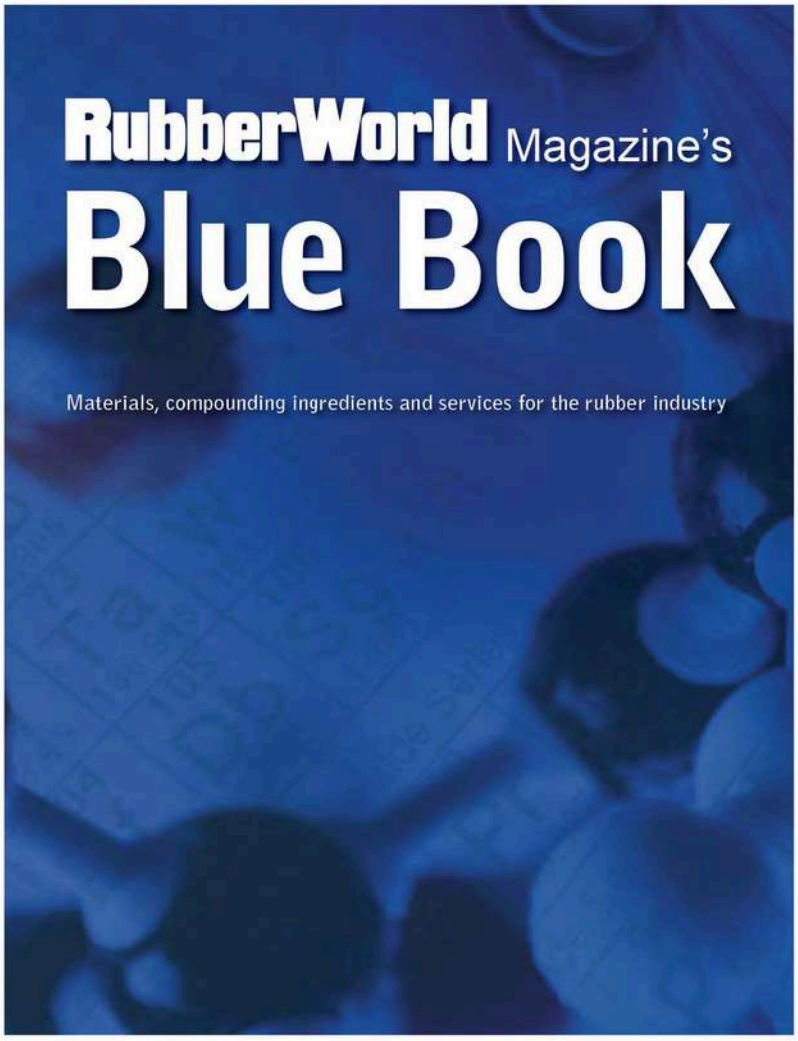

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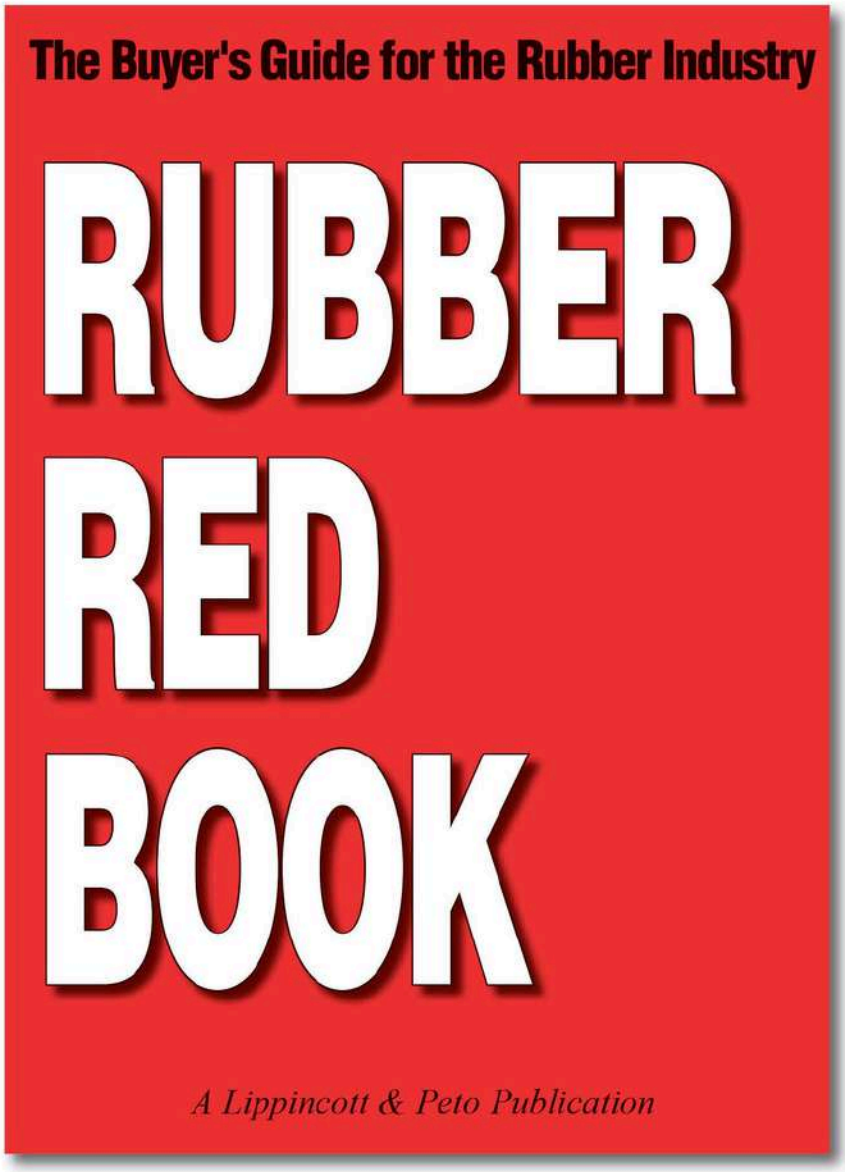

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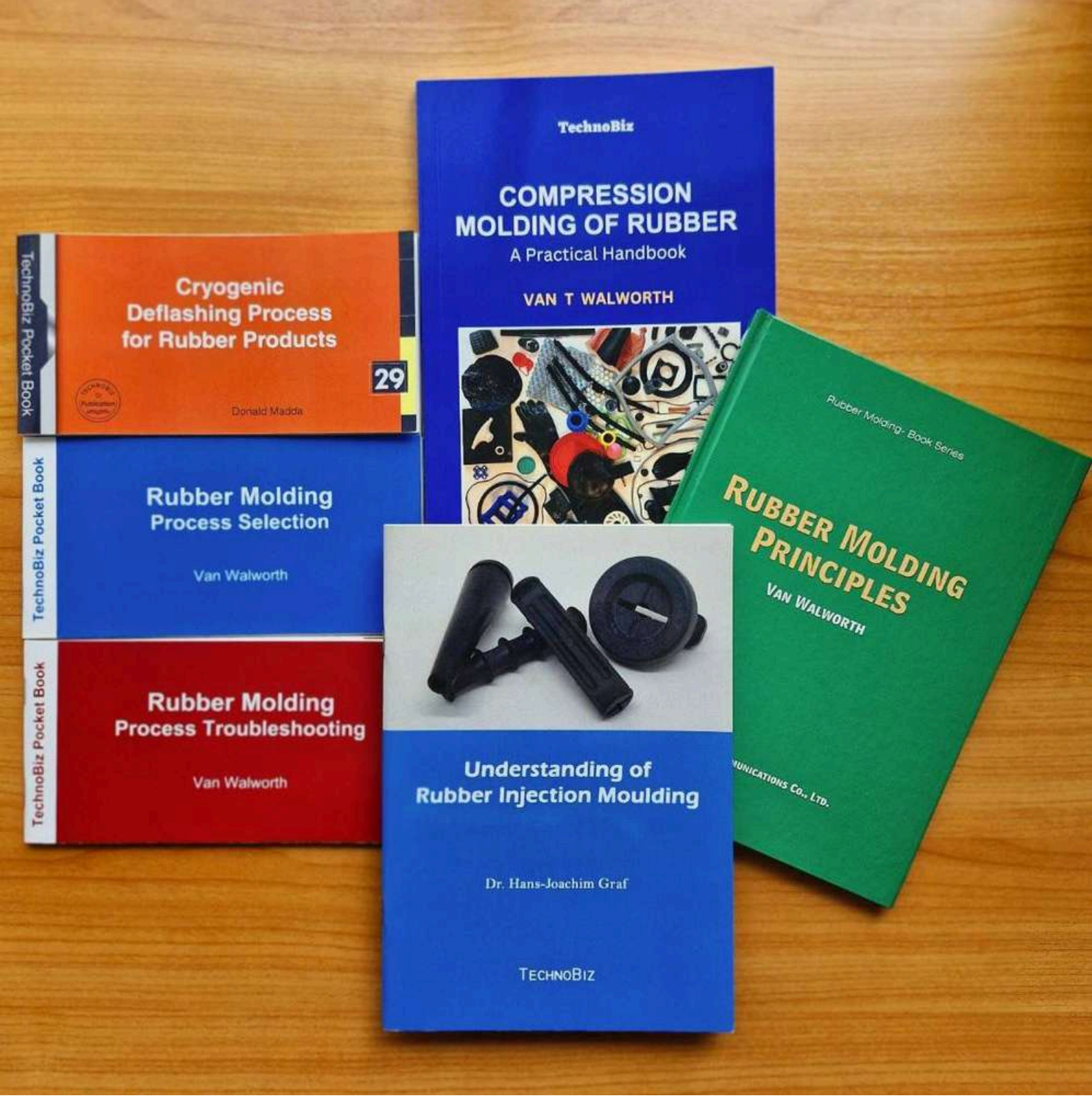

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