

A celebration of the Taiwanese industry

The 5th Taiwan International Fastener Show (Fastener Taiwan) marked another record high, featuring 415 exhibitors, and more than 1,107 booths, across an exhibition floor of almost 20,000m² – showcasing the machinery and products that underline why Taiwan has a reputation as the ‘Kingdom of Screws’.

With the enthusiastic participation of buyers and fastener exhibitors from around the world, the three day exhibition attracted 2,193 international buyers from 73 countries. Participation increased by 10% when compared with the previous exhibition. The show also drew over 30,000 domestic and foreign visitors. A lively atmosphere of business activities was created on the venue floor, alongside some eye-catching stands that underlined not only the professionalism of the Taiwanese companies but also that this was a celebration of the Taiwanese fastener industry and its capabilities. Up to 90% of buyers expressed their approval and satisfaction with this year’s exhibition and over 80% expressed their intention to return in 2020.

The top ten purchasing nations this year were mainland China, Japan, India, the United States, Germany, Italy, Malaysia, Vietnam, South Korea, and Thailand. Organisers reported that there were 70% more buyers from Italy this year, with more buyers also attending from Germany, Thailand, Brazil, Russia, and France – demonstrating that the exhibition has become an ideal business procurement platform for the global fastener industry.

A rapidly growing sector for Taiwanese companies is the automotive market, with several exhibitors highlighting the services and products they can provide. For instance, Nufast Logistics Co Ltd underlined its ability to work with OEMs and tier 1 and 2 suppliers – providing a flexible service and the ability to work with customers on designing new special parts. The company already works with leading companies within the North American and European markets and is looking to expand into new key markets.

Another company highlighting its automotive capabilities was Ying Ming Industry Co Ltd – a specialist in manufacturing high-tensile fasteners. Ying Ming is a tier one supplier to Ford North America and is able to carry out the entire production process in-house thanks to its own heat treatment and zinc plating lines. Carol Liu, project manager at Ying Ming, commented: “With 45 years of experience behind us, Ying Ming is not just a manufacturer but also a problem solver for our customers. Our experience with unique customer driven designs, and professional production expertise, ensures the ultimate in product quality, cost-effectiveness and customer satisfaction.”

With ISO/TS 16949 approval, Lu Chu Shin Yee Works Co Ltd had one of the most striking stands at the show – decorated with numerous plants and flowers to highlight the company’s connection with the environment. The company also focused on the addition of its new 5-storey office building in 2016, which was added to its manufacturing site with the aim to optimise its global customer service.



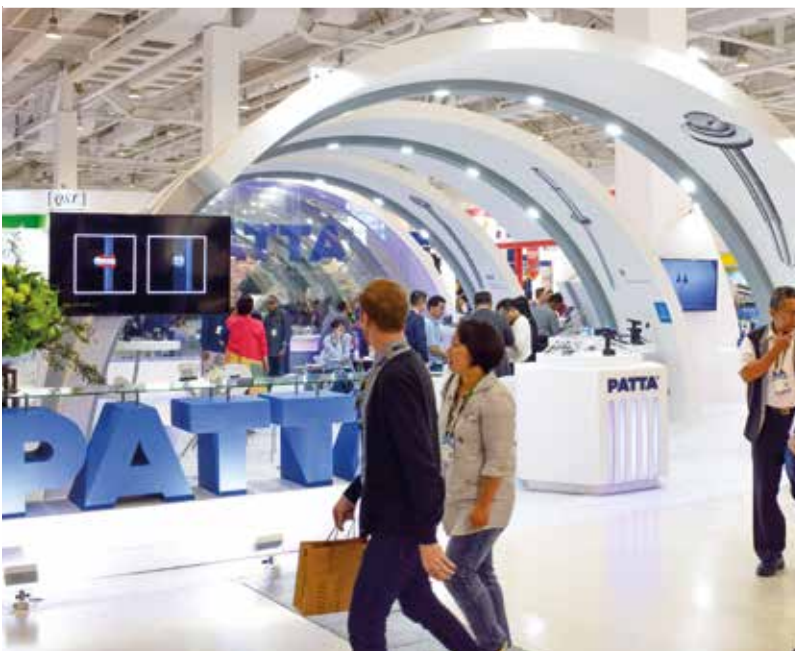
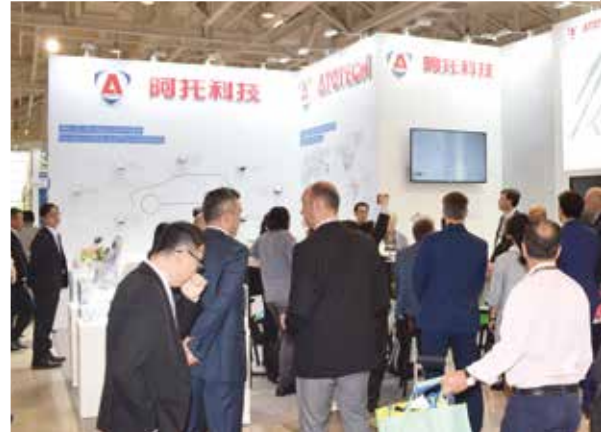


Other notably stands at the show included Your Choice Fasteners & Tools Co Ltd focusing on its 25th anniversary and wide range of products – including self-drilling, self-tapping, window, wood and roof screws. Jessica Huang, vice general manager at Your Choice, announced at the show that the company will also now be working with titanium and aluminium material, enabling it to expand its range, as well as optimise its product capabilities and the applications they can be used in.

Shuenn Chang Fa Enterprise Co Ltd concentrated on its screw manufacturing capabilities with the company producing screws from 10mm up to 1,000mm. The company also focused on its ability to work with customers on designing bespoke screws. Through the use of a 3D printer Shuenn Chang designs the product, as well as speeds up the R&D process by creating prototypes to show customers the exact design of the screw.

Anchor Fasteners Industrial Co Ltd presented its fastener production system, developed alongside Xwin, which helps Anchor visualise its rivet nut production process and provides quality monitoring to improve productivity.

Finally, Atotech Group showcased a cross section of its product portfolio for zinc and zinc alloy plating, zinc flake coatings, as well as combined solutions for industry demands. Also, Gertjan van der Wal, vice-president GMF division, Neil Patton, global product director zinc flake coatings, and Leon C.H. Liu, business manager GMF division, gave a corporate presentation on Atotech Group's general metal finishing capabilities, its best local service strategy, and recent technology developments.





→ 2018 Global Fastener Industry Summit

The 2018 exhibition featured a variety of activities, including the Global Fastener Summit held on the opening day of the exhibition with a car fastener-themed focus. The European Fastener Distributor Association (EFDA), Auto Manufacturer Mercedes Benz (Germany), Vissart Europe (France), TR Fastenings (UK), and QST International (Taiwan) were all invited to analyse the global automotive fastener industry and market trends. The summit drew over 250 fastener industry representatives from 19 countries including Taiwan, the United States, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Spain, India, Poland, China, Brazil, South Korea, and Japan. The entire summit was also broadcast live to over 1,600 online viewers.

Taiwan International Fastener Show procurement meetings were also held during the exhibition. Fifty-one 'heavyweight' buyers from Germany, the United States, Russia, France, Brazil, and South Africa were invited to participate in 230 negotiation sessions with 78 domestic exhibitors, generating potential business opportunities of up to US\$270 million. The first ever One-on-One Employment Meetings event attracted six domestic manufacturers and sixteen applicants to forty-six matching sessions. Five applicants were potentially hired as manufacturing employees. Two seminars focused separately on India and Indonesia's fastener markets and smart manufacturing, and attracted over 300 fastener manufacturers.

Side events were also a huge success. Domestic industries were updated on industry trends and industry knowledge. The events also facilitated cooperative opportunities and matchmaking for industry professionals, thus strengthening the sustainability and global competitiveness of Taiwan's fastener industry. +





Strong growth in 2018

During the Fastener Taiwan Show, Walter M. S. Yeh, president and CEO of the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA), discussed developments within the Taiwanese fastener market and what the sector needs to do to progress.

Despite keen competition from China and south-east Asia countries, Taiwan's fastener exports rose 13.2% to US\$4.3 billion (€3.6 billion) last year, marking an impressive double-digit growth for 2017. In terms of volume, exports of fasteners – including bolts, nuts and nails – went up 4% to 1.59 million tonnes over that of 2016. Indicating a growth in both value and volume, according to statistics released by the government.

The recovery of the global economy, which led to gradual return of the buying power of developed countries like the USA, Europe and Japan, was seen as the major reason of such increases.

In 2017, the United States remained the top export destination for Taiwan's fasteners with US\$1.66 billion, up 12.73% over that of 2016, accounting for a 38.56% market share. Germany followed with US\$399 million, up to 16.76%, accounting for a 9.28% market share. The Netherlands came third with US\$239.63 million, up 15.4% and representing a 5.58% market share.

The same period saw Taiwan importing 18,847 tonnes of fasteners worth US\$137.68 million from other countries, down 6.8% in volume and up 0.17% in value over 2016, respectively. The top three suppliers were China, Japan and Vietnam.

The fastener industry is one of the most important export-oriented industries in Taiwan. More than 90% of Taiwan's fastener industry export their product abroad. But the rise of China's so-called 'red supply chain' has made competition even more fierce. The European Commission's elimination of anti-dumping duties on steel fasteners from China in early 2016 has also made an impact on Taiwan's fasteners exports to Europe.



In order to help Taiwan break away from price cutting competition of low grade products made in China, Taiwan's economy ministry has assisted 10 local companies to transform and upgrade their structures through so-called NICE (Niche product, Intelligence equipment, Competent works, Eco-friendly process) programme since December 2016. The programme is expected to attract over NT\$4 billion worth of investment in five years and increase sales by more than NT\$30 billion (€840 million).

Looking ahead, the business outlook in 2018 is rather optimistic, given the International Monetary Fund's upward adjustment of its global economic growth forecast to 3.7%, as well as the global trade volume forecast for this year – indicating a stronger global recovery is on hand. Also, the USA is expected to see an 18% increase in orders for fasteners to go with its new construction projects, as indicated by the US government sponsored Federal National Mortgage Association, commonly known as Fannie Mae.

While Japan's planned lifting of the preferential tax treatment for China's steel fasteners in April this year is expected to reduce China's competitiveness in steel fasteners, Taiwan's government's active promotion of trade links with south-east Asia nations, and India, will further help expand the overseas markets for local fastener suppliers.

All these contribute to a positive business outlook for Taiwan. However, suppliers need to step up their R&D, focus on their core know-how, and embrace industry upgrade and transformation for creating higher value products – including automotive fasteners, as well as titanium fasteners for the aerospace industry – in order to stay competitive. +



NICE high-value upgrade and transformation programme

Because of the solid foundation of Taiwan's fastener industry, plus the government-led promotion of the industry's transformation, Taiwan was able to develop and produce more higher value products – including automotive parts and components, as well as alloy steel bolts with a tension three times higher than that of low carbon steel products.

Boltun showcases its abilities

Editor Will Lowry recently had the opportunity to visit Boltun Group's head office in Tainan, Taiwan, and experience first-hand the scale of its manufacturing capabilities, experience, and growing global presence.

Founded in 1988, Boltun Group has around 3,800 employees across its 21 facilities, in five countries, with an annual capacity of 120,000 tonnes. A key supplier to OEMs, tier suppliers and fastener distributors, Boltun generates sales of over US\$600 million (€500.5 million).

During the visit Jason Chen, sales director at Boltun Group, gave a presentation outlining the different production facilities around the world and how the Group is realising its global production concept. Boltun Group has seven production facilities in Taiwan, six in China and one in Thailand. A key part of its global production concept was the acquisition of German-based ESKA Automotive GmbH in 2014 – giving it direct access to the European automotive sector. This was enhanced in 2017 through Boltun investing in a new competence centre to produce cold formed aluminium fasteners and parts.

“The recent addition of the manufacturing plants in Germany have increased our global reach and given our European customers the opportunity to choose whether to use our local production or our Asian facilities,” explains Jason. “We want to grow our capabilities and produce close to our customers. For instance, our strategy in China is to produce whatever the Chinese customers’ need within China – reducing lead times and avoiding any logistics costs or import tariffs. 70% of our production in China is direct to automotive OEMs and being close to our customers is proving a real benefit.”



Across all of Boltun's production facilities there is an emphasis on integrated production lines, with strict guidelines and procedures guaranteeing that all products are produced to the highest quality. “We have check points throughout the production process that ensure we are producing to the exacting demands of our customers,” mentions Jason. “In addition, all our processes are monitored so that we can consistently deliver first class products.”

For every plant Boltun produces its own cold forming machinery – and also manufactures in-house the majority of the tooling for machinery. “Being able to produce our own machinery and tooling is a big advantage,” states Jason. “It means that we keep all of this knowledge and experience within the company and is a real benefit when we are looking at new products and opportunities.”

After the presentation there was a guided tour of the production facilities – underlining Boltun's immense capabilities and how it has become a leading global producer. The tour showcased Boltun's ability to manufacture internal threaded fasteners, external threaded fasteners and customised parts.

“Most manufacturers produce bolts or nuts, but at Boltun we can produce both and invest heavily in both sectors,” points out Jason. “The possibilities we can offer customers are almost endless. For instance, we can hot forge up to M76 with the process fully automated. Also, thanks to our mechanical engineering ability and the expert knowledge within the company, we can work with customers on new products and drawings.”

In addition to its vast cold forming and hot forging capabilities, the tour also outlined Boltun's CNC machining division, its stamping capabilities – up to 400 tonnes, plus its threading machinery, heat treatment lines and coating lines. There was also the opportunity to see Boltun's complete range of optical sorting machines and fully equipped laboratory. +



Optimised plating processes introduced

Zong Lien Industry Co Ltd's new US\$27 million plating facility is now up and running – helping to reduce the bottleneck in electroplated fasteners created by the 2014 clampdown by Taiwanese environmental regulators.

In 2014 the lead times for electroplated fasteners was seriously impacted, and costs driven up, when Taiwanese environmental authorities radically tightened controls over the discharge of waste effluent into watercourses following a series of investigations in late 2013.

For the last three years Zong Lien Industry has been building its new facility, with four plating lines now up and running – with the possibility of an additional four lines in the future. The base coat platings available from Zong Lien includes hex chromium plating (clear and yellow zinc), trivalent chromium plating, yellow zinc chromium plating and iridescent zinc chromium plating.

An important part of the new facility is the modern wastewater treatment facilities that ensure galvanised and degreasing wastewater is properly cleaned to maintain stable water quality. "This has been a big investment for the company, but it is a long-term investment," stated Zong Lien. "We are currently plating 8,000 parts per month, but we have more capacity available. We also have the option and space to introduce another four lines to meet demand as and when required." +

