

Firestone Tire and Rubber Company

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In 1900, Harvey S. Firestone established the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company in Akron, Ohio. Firestone relied on other companies to manufacture the rubber. His firm simply fastened the rubber to steel carriage wheels. In its first year of operation, the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company grossed more than 100,000 dollars in profit. In 1903, the company began to manufacture rubber, and in 1904, the firm proceeded to develop pneumatic tires for automobiles. In 1905, Henry Ford placed his first order for tires from Firestone. Firestone immediately hired additional workers, raising the number of employees from one dozen to 130. The following year, the Firestone Tire and Rubber Company produced more than twenty-eight thousand tires and sold more than one million dollars worth of tires. By 1910, the company manufactured more than one million tires. Firestone's innovations in tire design allowed automobiles to travel faster and more safely.

Firestone became involved in producing tires for automobile racing early on. The first race car to win the Indianapolis 500 in 1911 used Firestone tires. Between 1920 and 1966, every car that won the race used Firestone tires as well. The company also began to open automotive service stations, where customers could purchase tires and other items for their cars. From 1928 to 1964, Firestone also sponsored a weekly radio program titled the "Voice of Firestone." All of these activities helped to make Firestone a household name by the mid-twentieth century.

In 1988, the Bridgestone Corporation, a Japanese Company, purchased Firestone. Bridgestone is involved in tire manufacturing on an international scale, making the corporation one of the largest of its kind in the world.

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