

# Staging the show

*Trade fairs as an impulse for effective international communication*

**oha communication**  
Consulting and Public Relations



*Online media has become too important to be ignored. Some tools are suitable for business-to-business marketing.*

Since the Middle Ages, trade fairs have proven to be a very powerful marketing tool. Today's leading international shows attract exhibitors, purchasers and the trade media from around the globe. According to a survey conducted by the Simmons Market Research Bureau, 91% of attendees rank trade shows as "extremely useful" for gathering purchasing information and for socializing.

At the show, the players in the market can position their company, demonstrate products and services, study activities of rivals and examine market trends. Events enable face-to-face communication, the most powerful way to maintain relationships and create new ones. However, fairs involve a considerable investment by participating companies. To make the show a success, communication is a crucial factor.

## Early preparation ensures success

While budget planning usually starts a year before the event, the products to be showcased are determined only months before the show. The bustle begins: Sales managers start inviting



*Trade fairs provide a chance to introduce companies & products to the media from all over the world.*

their customers while product managers try to finalize new developments, and marketing managers are busy preparing the stand and updating sales brochures. If press releases are being prepared, this often happens just weeks or days before the event – too late to realize their full potential.

Trade publications and fair organizations offer multiple channels to communicate effectively with the industry. However, depending on the publishing frequency, information is needed at least four to eight weeks before the show. Editorial calendars are usually provided with the media kit that can easily be downloaded from a medium's website. Offering editors an exclusive interview, a professional article or information on new product releases ahead of the show can help to draw additional attention to the company's stand.

## Expanding public relations internationally

The higher the relevance of a trade fair is, the more coverage it gets by international publications. Media often cooperate with the fair organization and are

IMAGE SOURCE: WESSE-STUUTTGART



*Socializing: Business is not done between companies but between people.*

displayed as official partners on the show's website. Therefore, trade fairs provide an excellent chance to make individual appointments and introduce the company and new products to editors from all over the world. The earlier and better the preparation, the better the outcome.

If you managed to win an editor's interest, make sure you have well-written press releases and high quality images at hand as well as background information on the company. Discuss in advance, if the editor is interested in interviewing a technical expert or a country manager. If so, provide your spokespersons with core messages, dos and don'ts as well as brief background information on the medium. Support both the editor as well as your protégé during the interview and follow up on the story after the show.

**Do it yourself - online**

Finally, trade fairs are a socializing event. Besides gathering business cards and additional information for lead generation, you can keep those not attending the show up to date by sharing information on the web. Take a good camera with

you and document the highlights. Post a couple of comments via Twitter, display images on your company's website or Facebook fanpage, publish a video interview with your CEO on YouTube or make a presentation held at a conference available on SlideShare.

These new channels are easy to use and available to anyone connected to the Internet. With the growing number of professionals using Facebook and other networking sites, so-called social media platforms are becoming increasingly important for business-to-business marketers. They use them less as a networking tool and more as a soapbox from which they are able to demonstrate thought leadership, promote their companies and interests and drive additional traffic to their websites. **GAT**

IMAGE SOURCE: MONOCLE/OHA COMMUNICATION



*Instead of visiting customers around the world, it might make sense to meet them at the fair.*



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ABOUT THE COMPANY

oha communication is a consultancy and agency for international public relations. The team supports companies in attracting the attention of selected target groups. The services include profile development, strategic and market-specific PR advisory as well as the coordination and implementation of PR activities.

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