

# 2021



## AUMA Practice Successful Participation in Trade Fairs



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**AUMA**  
**Association of the**  
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Littenstraße 9  
10179 Berlin  
Phone +49 (0) 30 24000-0  
info@auma.de  
auma.de

Editorial team:  
Sylvia Kanitz

With support from  
Lars Lockemann (Chapters 1 and 7)  
Karla Juegel (Chapters 2-4 and 10)  
Thorsten Kollmeier (Chapters 5 and 6)  
Spomenka Kolar-Zovko (Chapters 8 and 9)

Review:  
Katharina Hellriegel-Stauder, Hofmeister Stauder. Büchermacher

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## I

## Successful participation in trade fairs in Germany

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Trade fairs have by far the widest range of functions of all marketing instruments at a company's disposal. They are used to attract business and bolster the company's image, as well as for professional networking, searching for business partners and market research. The same applies on the visitors' side of things: Trade fairs are ideal for gaining an overview of the market, comparing prices and conditions, testing products, discussing possible applications and concluding contracts. That is why trade fairs have not lost their significance even in the online age. After the first few dramatic years of the Covid-19 pandemic, many exhibitors are now pursuing even more objectives at trade fairs than they did in previous years. Not to mention enhancements in digital technology have further increased the scope of trade fair activities.

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Exhibiting companies are demonstrating a great deal of innovation and providing solutions to the challenges of our time. Accompanying events and conferences provide additional information on current scientific research and the future of sectors and industries. These sophisticated trade fair concepts are widely accepted among the sectors involved, which often base their production and organisation on the leading trade fair – this holds true for both small and large companies, nationally and internationally.

You can achieve the most success at trade fairs with good preparation and by selecting the right trade fairs to attend, i.e. those that best meet your company's goals. The fierce competition in many sectors is particularly evident at German trade fairs, because German trade fairs attract more attention from the world market than most other locations.

As a venue for trade fairs, Germany is known for tradition and dynamism at the same time. Industry-specific event programmes are combined with excellent organisation and are constantly adjusting to changing markets and technological developments. Last but not least, the Covid-19 pandemic has shown how willing to adapt the world of trade fairs is.

All this shows how essential proper preparation for a trade fair is. This brochure provides a guide.

**The AUMA team wishes you every success at your next trade fair.**



# 1. Trade fairs as part of the marketing mix

## The position of trade fairs in the marketing mix

Trade fairs are an established, powerful marketing and communication tool. However, the strain on your internal resources to prepare a good company presence at a trade fair is equally intense. At the same time, trade fairs are undergoing a profound change, which is driven in particular by the digitalisation of B2B communication.

The needs of the market and consumers are now the focus of your marketing even more so than was the case in years gone by. The decision to participate in a trade fair must therefore be made in the context of your company's marketing strategy, with particular reference to the information and contact needs of your customers. Customers expect these needs to be met all-year-round and across all channels – not only at certain trade fairs.

In addition to looking at the classic marketing mix, an analysis of customer journeys is therefore critical for a company's success when it comes to integrating trade fairs into a coherent overall strategy. Trade fairs are changing as information technology evolves. As information can be made available and accessed anytime, anywhere, trade fairs are moving away from product and sales events to become communications events that focus on personal engagement.

However, trade fairs are not only an efficient medium for communication policy, they can also influence distribution, product and pricing policies. The wide range of functions that they serve means that trade fairs are a well-established part of companies' marketing and communication – and for visitors, they remain a key platform for dialogue and obtaining information as part of their customer journey.

### Selected functions

#### Trade fairs

- offer a concentrated view as a reflection of selected markets
- offer an experience and appeal to all of the five senses
- ensure and increase market transparency
- open up new markets
- allow a direct comparison of price and performance
- promote the intensive exchange of information

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Trade fairs are used to meet a wide range of corporate objectives. Using trade fairs for marketing purposes involves both concentration and rationalisation, as they can be used for multiple functions.

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No other tool is able to present your company and your products so comprehensively through direct personal contact. Trade fairs also provide necessary starting points for a sales-oriented corporate policy. This is where events on the market, the nature and extent of changes, and the direction and pace of future developments are made clear. Trade fairs are a unique medium with unique potential.

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Unlike online formats, internet searches, banners, letters, email newsletters, brochures and catalogues, all of which ultimately convey only an abstract idea, at trade fairs the product itself is in the main focus, even in terms of the sensory experience. Machines and systems are shown in operation. Personal information and dialogue are directly and inseparably connected to the technical presentation. Here customers get a customised presentation, tailored to their needs. Personal exchange and personal experience become increasingly important when products, services and areas of application require more in-depth explanation and become more complex.

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Comparison with the competition is quick and easy at trade fairs. Exchange of experiences and conversations remain important. A personal, trust-based relationship between business partners is therefore a particularly important factor when it comes to decision-making. Personal acquaintances and word-of-mouth marketing have an inherent value when it comes to competition for customers' trust. In both national and international competition, customer proximity is even more important as a factor for strategic success. You can also achieve your marketing goals by visiting potential customers on site, but this lacks the self-presentation power made possible at trade fairs. Field sales staff usually only have themselves and a couple of tablets available – they cannot show the system in operation. Nor are there specialists present, ready to answer all manner of questions about the system's function, mode of operation and expenditure/income calculations. Professionals agree that nowhere else do so many competent experts come together in such a short space of time as at trade fairs – and that makes the costs worthwhile. The acceptance levels of a new product or prototype can be quickly tested at a trade fair. The reactions of the interested parties generate valuable insights for product and market research.





Another advantage of attending trade fairs is maintaining contact with your regular customers. Instead of having to visit them, which involves a lot of travel and time, you can use short conversations at the stand to refresh your contacts and strengthen your customer relationships. Trade fairs enable multiple marketing tools to be combined. If the primary focus is to acquire new customers, an extensive visitor marketing campaign is necessary before the trade fair. If on the other hand, the focus is on contact with regular customers, before the trade fair, they will need to be actively encouraged to visit the stand. A simple analysis of what happens at a trade fair shows that a wide range of far-reaching functions can be implemented using this marketing tool. All of these factors highlight the importance of trade fairs in the marketing mix.

### Trade fair participation as a business process

Similar to advertising, sales promotion and public relations, trade fair participation is generally a widely discussed topic throughout the entire hierarchy of a company, and one that is contentious and emotive.

Undoubtedly, trade fairs are complex matters. Poor experience, insufficient knowledge of the relevant factors – for example how to select a trade fair and which trade fairs will be effective – but also the emergence of new digital formats, are all factors that may mean participation in the trade fair is met with scepticism or rejection. This uncertainty can only be reduced if you view trade fair participation as a business process and integrate it into the dynamic process of your company. Therefore the collection and analysis of all necessary internal data (such as the product and the design of the product range) and external data (e.g. customers, competitors) needs to be done first. After that, an evaluation of your own marketing concept will be carried out on the basis of the data and specifications. That evaluation will show what role a trade fair can play as a marketing medium. It is also necessary to set out suitable strategic measures, for example the trade fair objectives (► Chapter 2, Objectives of trade fair participation) and selecting the right trade fair (► Chapter 3, Selection and decision-making criteria), as well as tactical measures, such as the use of an individual marketing mix. The creation and enforcement of the individual aspects requires the appropriate organisation, management and control.

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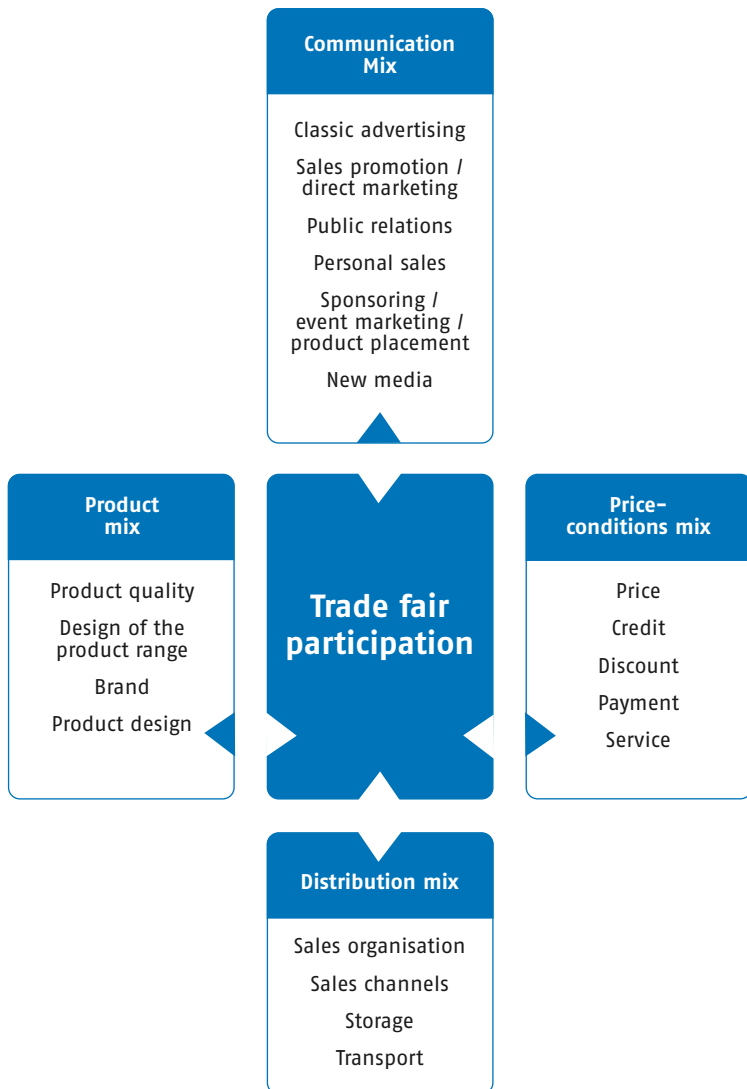
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## Participation in the marketing mix





## Trade fairs as part of the communication mix

The process of communication involves an exchange of messages and information. Information is also exchanged at a trade fair; the exhibiting company, its stand, its products and its staff act primarily as a provider of information. Visitors initially take on the role of information recipient, but with the intensity of a face-to-face meeting, may then enter into a dialogue and establish personal contact with the exhibitor, resulting in an exchange of information.

The trade fair acts as a framework for the actual encounters between people and products or services that require explanation. The trade fair becomes a means of communication. In this context, personal conversations can then be held – in some cases involving an encounter between people and products without any external media at all. Communication is therefore a key function of trade fairs and exhibitions. The instruments of a conventional company communication policy are online advertising, classic advertising, sales promotion, personal sales and public relations. In addition, below-the-line elements such as sponsorship, event marketing, product placement and online media are added to the mix. Each of these communication instruments in the mix can be implemented with a variety of measures. In the broader sense of communication, market research and corporate design also count and are relevant to the trade fair: on the one hand, the exhibiting company receives information about the market and on the other, it conveys a certain image by means of its stand design.

Personal dialogue at the stand is very important. Only with this information and communication tool can new contacts be opened up and existing relationships developed over the long term. At a trade fair you can provide much more intensive and active information about a product or service than with any other communication instrument because the sensory experience is intense not only for visitors, but also for the companies presenting, which ensures that the communication has a lasting effect.

Multifunctionality makes trade fairs particularly effective in comparison to other media. No other medium can be used in such a customised way, and nowhere else can companies communicate with customers so directly to discover information needs and to satisfy existing needs for information. The company's advantages in terms of their products and general business practices, such as reliability, good customer service and high product

### Communication mix

- Classic advertising
- Sales promotion / direct marketing
- Public relations
- Personal sales
- Sponsorship / event marketing / product placement
- New media

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quality, can be made tangible and experienced through the other senses. Conversely, when participating in a trade fair, a company can gain valuable information through discussions with interested parties, which can be used for product development, market research and looking towards the future. A company can tap into and influence greater customer potential by participating in trade fairs. Changes in customer structure and purchasing behaviour can be perceived more quickly and directly (► Chapter 7, Communication and visitor marketing).

### Trade fairs as part of the price and conditions mix

#### Price-conditions mix

Price  
Credit  
Discount  
Payment  
Service

The primary influencing factors for the development of an individual price and conditions mix are precise knowledge of the customer structure, the operating variables, the locations and the delivery distances. One of the ways a company can find out the necessary information is talking to the customer. Participation in a trade fair can be used to review the existing price and conditions mix. Greater room for manoeuvre can be exploited.

The following aspects play a role in pricing:

- Packaging, freight and insurance costs
- Costs for customer service and service
- Existing cost estimates
- Terms of payment
- Payment, quantity and special discounts
- Terms of delivery
- Terms and conditions for returns

Consideration should also be given to the payment history and the credit rating of customers and potential customers. The price and conditions mix must be designed in such a way that the company's business objectives are achieved and the company's earnings are secured.



## Trade fairs as part of the distribution mix

Clarifying aspects of the distribution mix shows to what extent participation in a trade fair can be regarded as positive. You must check whether there is a need for further expansion or other change in the existing sales organisation: examples include a restructuring of the field sales team, a search for representatives or dealers, or the search for cooperation partners for warehousing and transport. Another consideration is whether the existing sales channels need to be changed in terms of quality or quantity.

### Distribution mix

Sales organisation  
Sales channels  
Storage  
Transport

## Trade fairs in the product mix

Trade fairs are stages to display innovation on. The general event conditions of the exhibition companies indicate in particular that products and services demonstrated in trade fairs must meet the demand for innovation. To check the product mix, it is necessary to know the market cycle of the products to be exhibited. The range can be expanded if necessary to better present the latest product innovations at the trade fair. The product design should be contemporary, and help promotes sales – right down to the packaging. If your product is a branded item or quality marks are used, the trade fair is the time to highlight that. Participation in the trade fair gives you the opportunity to put the individual elements of the product mix, and the product itself, to the test. Discussions with users enable you to gauge the acceptance of the product and generate ideas for the product policy and product range policy.

### Product mix

Product quality  
Design of the  
product range  
Brand  
Product design

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## A look at competitors

Analysing the strengths and weaknesses of the competition will give you further information to assess future and actual participation in the trade fair.

The objectives of this competitive analysis can include:

- Better assessment of the company's own position in the market (positioning)
- Learning from the market strategy of competitors
- Better assessment of the company's own development

It is important to know who your competitors are. In addition to direct competitors producing the same or similar products, companies using the same production process or offering alternative products must also be taken into account.

The individual competitive markets can be divided up, for example, by products and services, as well as by geographical aspects. According to this, the competitive conditions for each individual market can be determined on the basis of various criteria, for example:

- Company image
- Location or production facilities
- Service areas
- Production capacity
- Research and development activities
- Marketing strategy/marketing mix
- Advertising budget
- Sales network
- Profit situation
- Development trends

Participating in a trade fair gives you additional market transparency as you meet different companies with the same offer structure.

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## Summary of key findings

As part of medium and long-term corporate planning, participation in trade fairs makes a significant contribution to the future positioning of your company on the market.

Three criteria should be met when participating in international trade fairs.

Participation generally makes sense if

- the company's sales are not limited to a specific region,
- the sales are oriented toward a sufficiently broad customer structure,
- the product or service involves a high level of expertise.

Mass-produced goods and everyday products will attract little attention at a trade fair. The visitors come in the expectation of discovering new products and seeing products at a high technical level or special products "live" (► Chapter 2, Objectives of trade fair participation).

Answering most of the questions derived from the marketing mix gives you a basic structure for your individual marketing mix and thus is also decisive for participation in the trade fair. In addition, other criteria, such as the quality of the upcoming trade fair (visitor structure and information provided by the organisers), play an important role in the final decision (► Chapter 3, Selection and decision-making criteria). Participating in a trade fair can be good for the synergy of your company and is especially likely to lead to success if you specifically coordinate it with the other elements of the marketing mix.

New markets, new customers and product innovations do not emerge overnight – not even at trade fairs. You should attend at least three events. A one-off participation will not give you a realistic picture. In particular this would mean squandering the opportunity to develop your initial contacts at the industry's main meeting point and stage for competition – namely the trade fair – at the next event.

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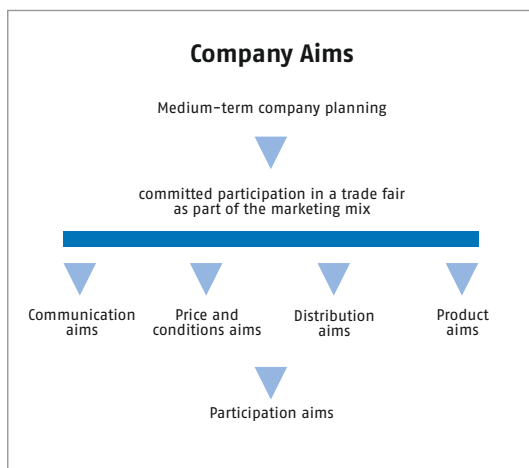
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## 2. Objectives of trade fair participation

### Objectives of the exhibiting companies

The decision to participate in trade fairs is based on the corporate planning and the analysis of the company's specific situation in close connection with the marketing and sales targets, and aligned with the company's range of products and services.



These days, trade fair participation falls under the heading of live marketing or event marketing. The word event plays an interesting role in this. "Event" is a neutral word in itself, but the addition of "marketing" turns it into a separate tool in the marketing communication of companies.

Trade fair participation always achieves a whole range of goals, though most of these are oriented towards marketing and sales goals, with a clear demand for **personal contact** and direct communication with visitors, as well as the **live experience**

of products, brands and companies. The following trade fair objectives are consistently derived from a holistic corporate strategy:

### Marketing objectives

- present the company
- increase awareness
- create recognition
- enhance image
- present products live
- present new products





## Sales targets

- generate orders
- sell products
- open up new markets
- customer retention
- competitor analysis

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## Contact objectives

- existing customer care
- new customer acquisition
- finding cooperation partners
- employee recruitment
- press/media contacts
- visitor surveys

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The target group of the exhibitor plays an additional role in determining the contact objectives. The question is: what is your company's target group and which contacts would you like to meet at the trade fair to generate contacts (see also ► Chapter 3, Selection and decision-making criteria).

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Further goals can be derived from the key role trade fairs play. They offer clear added value compared with other marketing communication tools and reflect the key factors of attending a trade fair in person.

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- presence at the most important industry event
- perception in relation to competitors
- networking with all stakeholders in the industry
- high-quality live contacts
- interactive experiences
- experience with all senses
- unexpected encounters

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During the Covid-19 pandemic, the rapid development of digital platforms created a "parallel digital world" on the internet that continues to give exhibitors and visitors the opportunity to exchange ideas and trade with one another.

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The term "digital or hybrid trade fair" has seen the emergence of new platforms that enable companies to generate contacts and hold virtual company and product presentations, which also involve different objectives.

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## Weighting of participation objectives

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The weighting of the participation objectives depends to a large extent on the trade fair or its typology, as well as the visitor structure and the objectives of the visitors. Three examples illustrate this:

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**At specialist trade fairs** that are predominantly structured for trade visitors, the focus is on providing sustainable information about the company, a customer-oriented conversation and a memorable presentation of the products. Trade visitors want to find out more and carry out comparisons at the trade fair so that they can then place their order: either directly at the trade fair or after the trade fair.

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**At order-based trade fairs** that are exclusively structured for trade visitors (mostly from the trade), collections of seasonal goods are presented, which are ordered directly at the stand and produced on a one-off basis after the fair. The trade fair covers the needs for resale in the trade. The presentation of the new collection and the sales discussion are decisive in this respect.

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**At public/consumer exhibitions** with an exclusively private visitor structure, products and services are offered for direct purchase, often combined with interactive experiences and applications. Generating sales and addresses for follow-up orders are in the foreground here.

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## Considering visitor objectives

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When setting goals, it is not only the visitor structure that matter, but also the visitor objectives. The question is: What do the visitors want?

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If you look at the objectives of the trade visitors, it is clear that the information (about the market, suppliers and innovations etc.) as well as further training and expanding knowledge should be in the foreground. This is followed by the idea of establishing contacts (exchange, getting to know each other, initiation and maintenance of contacts). Only a small proportion of trade visitors want to enter into direct contracts during the trade fair itself. This results in two findings: On the one hand, the focus at the stand is on providing information through presentations and conversations with the crew working on the stand, and on the other hand, the follow-up work and

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the associated preparation play a key role in generating orders. And this is where it comes full-circle: the contacts made at trade fairs form a valuable basis for the work and the warm acquisition by the sales team after the event.

**Tip:** Achievement of objectives and use of financial resources

The budget is closely linked to the objectives of trade fair participation. The extent to which the financial resources should be made available in order to achieve the objectives and the costs incurred is explained in detail in ► Chapter 4, in the Budget and cost planning section.

The determination of the trade fair objectives influences the entire organisational preparation up to the execution and the performance review of the trade fair participation (see also ► Chapter 10 Follow-up and performance review).

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### 3. Selection and decision-making criteria

Germany is one of the largest and most important venues for trade fairs in the world. Every industry and every topic is covered in Germany – in some cases even in different directions with regard to the type of trade fair, subject or visitor structure. Therefore, it is important to select the right trade fair to achieve the goals set by your company in the best possible way.

Trade fairs are marketplaces. The supply and demand on show at the trade fair reflects the market economy of the country or region. The more diverse the markets, the more diverse the trade fairs offered. What does this mean for you as an exhibiting company?

On the one hand, there are a large number of trade fairs to choose from, which results in the need for comparison and the definition of selection criteria, and on the other hand it reflects the high acceptance of the trade fairs as a marketing instrument.

The most important selection criteria are:

- Can your company achieve its specific investment objectives in line with the type of trade fair and the orientation of the trade fair?
- Does your offer correspond to the themes and nomenclature of the trade fair, in which the permitted products and categories are defined?
- Does the visitor structure of the trade fair correspond to the target group of your company in terms of quality and quantity?
- What is the importance and acceptance of the trade fair within the industry and are all market participants represented?

#### Evaluation and selection

##### Selection criteria

Your own situation and participation goals suit the theme of the trade fair

Representative offer

You reach your own user groups

New target groups are addressed

Specialist trade fairs make up the largest share of the German trade fair market. Each of these specialist trade fairs provides a representative overview of the respective industry sector.

They are usually distinguished in terms of the concept or focus of the offering and have clearly defined thematic priorities, which are defined by the organisers. The definition is based on the so-called nomenclature (list of products and



product groups that may be exhibited at the trade fair). Other products are not authorised.

In addition, the visitor structure is an important distinguishing feature. A distinction is made between specialist trade fairs, which are aimed entirely or predominantly at visitors with commercial goals, and public exhibitions, which inform the general public or interested consumers.

## Types of trade fairs

**Specialist trade fairs** (industry-specific trade fairs, special interest trade fairs) focus on one or a few sectors of the economy, or on certain services and are primarily aimed at trade visitors. Multi-sector and specialist trade fairs can be international, national or regional in terms of the visitor catchment area.

**Multi-sector trade fairs** present the essential, well-structured offer of several economic sectors, which are often linked by a central theme.

**Universal trade fairs** are trade fairs that present offers in almost all sectors of the economy and are mainly found in countries that have a less differentiated range of trade fairs (for example emerging and developing countries). They predominantly attract export-oriented German companies.

**Public/consumer exhibitions** are aimed at private visitors and the general public. They either present a wide range of different consumer goods and services or focus on a special interest topic (for example, health).

**Consumer exhibitions** are regional events aimed exclusively at private visitors. The range of products and services and the exhibitors mostly come from the region and always present a wide range of consumer goods and services for private households. Products are generally sold directly at the exhibition stand.

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## AUMA classification

### Trade fair and exhibition types

#### International trade fairs

- AUMA category: international

#### National trade fairs

- AUMA category: national

#### Regional exhibitions

- AUMA category: regional

The AUMA classification is an additional classification of trade fairs related to the area of origin and catchment of exhibitors and visitors.

**International trade fairs** are made up of at least 10% foreign exhibitors and 5% foreign visitors, but must have at least 5% foreign trade visitors. In addition, they present the primary range of products and services on offer in one or more sectors of the economy. On the visitor side, they

have a catchment area that extends significantly beyond the region; as a rule, at least 50% of visitors travel a distance of at least 100 km and a minimum of 20% cover 300 km or more.

**National trade fairs** present the primary range of products and services on offer in one or more sectors of the economy. On the visitor side, they have a catchment area that extends significantly beyond the region; as a rule, at least 50% of visitors travel a distance of at least 100 km and a minimum of 20% cover 300 km or more.

**Regional exhibitions** tend to have a predominantly regional visitor base. As a rule, well over 50% of visitors come from less than 100 km away. They cover a range of products and services that may also extend beyond the respective region.

Trade fairs in all three categories must meet further specific requirements for inclusion in AUMA media.

After this selection, it is advisable to get a first look at the event as a visitor to get an immediate impression. You will be able to see and experience how the exhibitors and competitors present themselves and what the visitors are interested in. Prior visits to the eligible events are definitely worthwhile, especially if you have a shortlist of more than one trade fair.

Your own products must fit the theme of the trade fair and be listed in the organiser's nomenclature. The trade fair must address the target groups in question in terms of quantity and quality (see the visitor structure analyses prepared by the Society for Voluntary Control of Fair and Exhibition Statistics (FKM)).



On the exhibitor side, the trade fair should at least offer a representative overview of the respective range of products and services and, better still, include all the leading suppliers of the relevant sector among their exhibitors. The better the representation on the provider side, the more attractive the trade fair will be to visitors. However, a trade fair should not be selected if the exhibitor does not have a sales structure or organisation for the market the company is looking to operate in or cannot set up such a structure or organisation in a short time. Merely participating in a trade fair, but not at the same time being present on the market brings little benefit in the sense of consistently and systematically tapping into the market.

### Selection of suitable trade fairs

#### Analysis of the "trade fair landscape"

- Topics
- Nomenclature
- Target groups
- Regional "reach"

#### Your own goals

#### Preliminary selection

#### Visit

It is also useful and beneficial to meet not only the direct target groups but also the contact persons who determine the general environment of the industry at a trade fair. These can be opinion leaders, decision makers and other groups of people. A further criterion is a simultaneous trade congress, which offers the opportunity to hold its own specialist lectures and, on the other hand, also encourages other relevant target groups to attend the trade fair. Sometimes the supporting programme also determines whether or not visitors attend a trade fair. Therefore, researching that supporting programme should be on the exhibitor's to-do list.

## Sources of information

Detailed information about the German trade fairs is provided by the various publications and the AUMA database on the Internet, as well as by each organiser for their own trade fairs.

You will find detailed information about trade fairs and exhibitions in Germany and abroad online at ► [auma.de](https://auma.de): this includes dates, event addresses, offerings and details such as the number of exhibitors, event size and number of visitors the last three times the event was held, as well as visitor structure analyses.

### AUMA

#### Association of the

#### German Trade Fair Industry

info@auma.de

www.auma.de

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The Society for Voluntary Control of Fair and Exhibition Statistics (FKM) provides certified data on exhibition space, number of exhibitors and visitors, as well as visitor structures for individual events recorded according to standardised rules.

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The data enables you to compare individual events when planning your trade fair attendance and provides information on trends regarding the respective trade fairs. In addition, the visitor structure data is useful in matching the target group with the visitor structure of the trade fair.

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The certified, up-to-date data can be found in the AUMA/FKM online database.

4

**FKM – Society for Voluntary Control  
of Fair and Exhibition Statistics**

info@fkm.de

www.fkm.de

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Industry-specific exhibition information is also available from the trade associations of industry, crafts and commerce. Cross-sectoral information for individual regions and countries is available from the Chambers of Industry and Commerce at ►[dihk.de](http://dihk.de), the Chambers of Foreign Trade at ►[ahk.de](http://ahk.de) and the Chambers of Crafts at ►[zdh.de](http://zdh.de).

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All professional organisers also offer up-to-date and comprehensive information about their events:

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- catalogue of the previous event
- breakdown of the products and services on offer and nomenclature
- trends of the number of exhibitors and visitors
- visitor structure data
- results of the exhibitor survey
- market and industry analyses (in some cases)

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For the addresses of the organisers, see ►[auma.de](http://auma.de)

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## FKM visitor profile analysis –Basics (result of all visitors)

### Total number of visitors

— %

#### A1 Region of residence

Domestic total	— %
Of which according to Nielsen:	
<b>Nielsen 1</b>	— %
Bremen	— %
Hamburg	— %
Lower Saxony	— %
Schleswig Holstein	— %
<b>Nielsen 2</b>	— %
North Rhine-Westphalia	— %
<b>Nielsen 3a</b>	— %
Hessen	— %
Rhineland-Palatinate	— %
Saarland	— %
<b>Nielsen 3b</b>	— %
Baden-Wuerttemberg	— %
Total foreign:	— %
davon: EU	— %
Rest of Europe	— %
Africa	— %
North America	— %
South & Central America	— %
Middle East	— %
South-East-Central Asia	— %
Australia/Oceania	— %

The five countries with the highest visitor shares

—	— %
—	— %
—	— %
—	— %
—	— %

Distance to home:

Less than 50 km	— %
More than 50 km up to 100 km	— %
More than 100 km up to 300 km	— %
More than 300 km	— %

#### A2 Position in the company/organization

Entrepreneur, co-owner, freelancer	— %
Managing director, board member, head of an authority etc.	— %
Area manager, works manager, plant manager, branch manager, head of public office	— %
Department head, group head, team leader	— %
Other salaried staff, civil servant, skilled worker	— %
Lecturer, teacher	— %
Trainee	— %
Other position	— %
Student	— %
Other not gainfully employed	— %
Hausfrau, -mann	— %
Rentner, Pensionär	— %

#### A3 Frequency of visits to the trade fairs

Previous event	— %
Earlier events	— %
First visit	— %

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## FKM visitor profile analysis – Additional questions

### Additional questions for trade visitors

#### B1 Economic sectors

#### B2 Influence on purchasing/procurement decisions

Decisively \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Collectively \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 In an advisory capacity/organization \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 No \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Pupil/student \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Other not gainfully employed \_\_\_\_\_ %

#### B3 Area of responsibility

Management \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Research/development/design \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Manufacturing, production, quality control \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Buying/procurement \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Finance/accounting, controlling \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Information and communication technology \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Organization, personnel, administration \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Marketing/sales/advertising/PR \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Logistics: storage, material management, transport \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Maintenance/repairs \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Other area \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Maintenance/repairs \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Student \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Other not gainfully employed \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 \_\_\_\_\_ %

#### B4 Occupation

#### B5 Size of company/organisation

Number of employees::  
 1 - 4 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 5 - 9 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 10 - 49 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 50 - 199 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 200 - 499 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 500 - 999 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 1,000 and more \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Student \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Other not employed \_\_\_\_\_ %

#### B6 Length of stay

Average length of stay \_\_\_\_\_ days

### Additional questions for private visitors

#### C1 Sex

Male \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Female \_\_\_\_\_ %

#### C2 Age

Up to 20 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Over 20 up to 30 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Over 30 up to 40 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Over 40 up to 50 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Over 50 up to 60 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Over 60 up to 70 \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Over 70 \_\_\_\_\_ %

#### C3 Size of household

1 person \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 2 persons \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 3 persons \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 4 persons \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 5 persons or more \_\_\_\_\_ %

#### C4 Buying or ordering capacity

Purchase or order made or intended at the exhibition  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 No \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Maybe \_\_\_\_\_ %

#### Follow-up business

Intent to buy at a later date  
 Yes \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 No \_\_\_\_\_ %  
 Maybe \_\_\_\_\_ %



## 4. Planning and organisation of trade fair participation

### Basic planning

Once you have selected a trade fair, you can start planning and organising your trade fair participation. The following section describes all the necessary measures step by step.

### Forms of participation

#### Single or joint company stands

Individual participation in a trade fair with your own stand offers the greatest opportunities to successfully present your company and your products. However, other methods of participation can have many advantages when first entering the trade fair scene:

- low costs and less effort
- simple organisation
- increased attention paid to the stand due to awareness of the initiator

Government agencies, associations and other institutions, such as chambers of industry and commerce, organise joint participation for several companies under one roof, led by a team of experts with trade fair experience. This form of participation is a great opportunity to gain experience at trade fairs.

#### Sub-exhibitors

Participation as a sub-exhibitor at the stand of a cooperation partner or an affiliated company can also be useful in the beginning and can help you familiarise yourself with the customs at a trade fair. The exhibits of a sub-exhibitor must also comply with the nomenclature. The main exhibitor must register the involvement of sub-exhibitors on the registration form. Sub-exhibitors are also mentioned in the trade fair catalogue.

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## Supporting programme

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### Participation in the supporting programme

Most trade fairs today have a number of accompanying programmes, special showcases or even conventions that run alongside them and offer visitors additional information. The exhibiting company may benefit from participating in these supporting programmes by taking part in presentations or lectures.

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Both free and paid options are generally available. The organiser is responsible for the programme and attracting visitors, and also provides the space. Exhibitors can also take part in special showcases on specific topics with their exhibits. These special showcases are usually arranged separately and are company-neutral.

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## Registration

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The deadline for registration is determined by the organiser based on how often the trade fair is held, and is different for each trade fair. Early planning is therefore advisable in order to be able to meet the deadline.

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The trade fair programme will be determined in consultation with your company's marketing and sales department before you register for the fair and before you have the relevant information on the size of the stand. The topics and the corresponding exhibits are planned in line with the nomenclature and visitor structure of the fair so that the space required can be determined during registration.

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The following information is required at the time of registration:

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- name and address of your company
- number of sub-exhibitors
- size of the stand (in square metres)
- width and depth of the stand
- location in the hall or in the outdoor area
- would you like to have the same space as you did for the previous event (yes/no)?
- stand type (standard row, corner, peninsula or block stand)
- design (one or two-story)
- information on the products presented accordance with the nomenclature

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In the case of joint participation, the institution responsible for the organisation will carry out the registration process with the organiser. The interested companies register with the respective institution at an early stage, specifying the desired stand size (in square metres).

## Size of the stand

Each stand, large or small, is divided into three functional areas that determine the overall size of the stand:

### Presentation area

The space required is based on the objectives of the participation and the trade fair themes with the associated superstructures (for example, stages), as well as the number and size of the selected products and exhibits. The presentation area includes all the space for exhibits, models, information boards, audio/video demonstrations and campaigns, as well as sufficient free space for the trade fair audience.

### Meeting area

Depending on the topics and type of discussions, open groups of seats, closed meeting rooms or a consultation area may be appropriate. In addition to these areas, the space required for the meeting area also includes stand information, bar and catering facilities. The expected number of visitors and the duration of the conversations will determine the number of seats.

### Utility areas

The utility areas include all areas that are off-limits to visitors: Kitchen, warehouse, changing room, technical adjoining rooms, staff rooms, offices.

## Stand types and stand location

Different stand types with different prices are available based on the delimitation from the adjacent stands and the opening to the aisles. The price per square metre for the respective stand type depends on the number of open sides. Thus, a standard row stand with one open side is the cheapest and the block stand with four open sides the most expensive variant.

### Technical and organisational stand concept

Stand size, type, location  
Architecture  
Layout  
Trade fair programme  
Technical equipment  
Transportation  
Stand set-up, dismantling  
Stand operations, organisation

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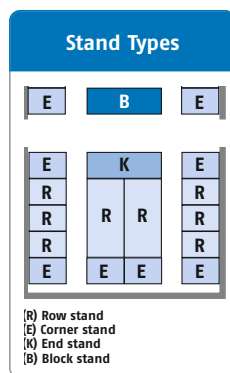
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### Standard row stand

The standard row stand is open to only one aisle on one side, and is located next to other standard row stands (or in rare cases, is open on two sides to two parallel aisles).

### Corner stand

A corner stand is located at the end of a row and is open on two sides to two perpendicular aisles. The hire price for a corner stand is higher than the hire price for a standard row stand. As the corner stand is located on two aisles, it is expected that it will attract more attention from visitors.

### Peninsula stand

The peninsula stand at the end of a row is open and visible on three sides. It is superior to the above-mentioned stand types, since it can attract far greater attention when used correctly.

### Block stand

The block stand (or island stand), the most expensive stand type, is surrounded by visitor aisles and attracts a high level of attention and perception thanks to its individual setting.

### Outdoor stand

An outdoor stand may be chosen to display entire systems or for very large and heavy products (such as construction machinery) that do not fit into the trade fair halls. In the open-air, each exhibitor must take responsibility for providing protected and covered meeting and function areas or a gazebo or pavilion.

### Stand position

The planning of the halls (stand areas and aisles) by the organiser takes into account the technical infrastructure, the expected number of visitors (width of the aisles) and the quality of the route around the trade fairs (visitor guidance).

The organiser specifies the following criteria for the location of the stand:

- floor plan and hall layout
- industry and product distribution
- infrastructure



In some cases, the exact placement with regard to the location and the neighbouring companies (competitors) can be agreed with the exhibition company in advance. In the case of subsequent events, the exhibiting company usually receives the same placement if an option for this is provided at the end of the trade fair. This is part of the customer care of the trade fair organiser and at the same time provides him with planning security.

## Terms and conditions for participation

With the registration documents, your company will receive:

- registration forms
- nomenclature
- floor plan and hall layout
- space requirements
- terms and conditions
- technical guidelines
- waste regulations
- services offered by the organiser for exhibitors

The terms and conditions of participation govern the contractual conditions, such as admission, stand hire, terms of payment, termination of the contract, registration of sub-exhibitors and additionally represented companies. In addition, they contain information on industrial property rights as well as liability and insurance. The terms and conditions of participation may differ from one organiser to another and may also differ from one trade fair to the next if the respective theme of the trade fair requires separate conditions. In exceptional cases (for example, Covid-19 pandemic), the organisers may also make adjustments to the terms and conditions of participation. A thorough review of the respective conditions is therefore absolutely necessary before every trade fair.

**Tip:** It is important to know that the contractual obligation does not arise upon registration for the exhibition, but only after receiving the final confirmation of the stand or placement by the organiser and confirmation of acceptance of this offer by the exhibiting company..

### Documents relating to trade fair participation

- Site maps
- Hall plans
- Registration documents
- Service documentation
- Space requirements
- Trade fair conditions
- Regulations

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If you withdraw from a trade fair, the costs will vary depending on when you announce your withdrawal. In the case of cancellation shortly before the start of the event, the full stand hire price may be due under certain circumstances.

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## Technical guidelines

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The technical guidelines contain times and regulations for setting up and dismantling, guidelines for the design of the stand, information on permissible building materials, requirements for maximum stand height, fire safety and operational safety, as well as for waste disposal, which is often adapted to the specific requirements of the theme of the trade fair – for example in cases where waste is produced, which requires special disposal.

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## Insurance

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The exhibiting company is in principle obliged to ensure sufficient insurance cover itself. As participation in a trade fair entails many risks, special exhibition insurance was developed decades ago. This insurance is used to cover the risk of transport and sojourn and can be arranged via a framework agreement provided by the organiser or commissioned via your company's own insurance provider. The exhibition insurance covers all risks to which the exhibition goods, the stand and the stand equipment are exposed – from transport to set-up, exhibition time and dismantling to the return of the goods to the storage location of the exhibiting company. Damage caused by visitors to the trade fair is also compensated. In addition, exhibitor's liability insurance can be taken out because each exhibitor is also liable for damage to persons or property that is culpably caused by their own company, employees and agents or by objects on display.

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## Services offered by the organisers

In principle, the organisers will help by providing advice and support for all organisational and technical issues. With the terms and conditions of participation or the stand confirmation, order forms for a variety of services will be sent or made available to book online. In general, the organiser offers all the services required for a complete participation in the trade fair – everything from a single source, so to speak. This is particularly advantageous for first-time exhibitors, SMEs and companies from abroad.

The full range of services is divided into two categories: There are services that are directly connected to the site and the event for organisational or safety reasons and are only offered by the organiser; and there are services that each exhibitor can, if necessary, either arrange with the organiser or its contractual partners, or on the open market.

The services which can only be booked via the organiser or through contractors commissioned by the organiser include the following services (strictly observe the deadline – in some cases there is a risk of express charges if the order is delayed):

- installation and consumption of electricity, water, compressed air, IT and internet
- working platforms
- ceiling suspensions and rigging requirements
- stand cleaning and waste disposal
- stand surveillance and safety
- ID cards for entry: Exhibitor, service, parking ID cards etc. (depending on the size of the stand, free ID cards for entry may be issued to the stand personnel; further ID cards can be purchased additionally)
- freight forwarding services on the premises
- storage capacities for empty and full goods on the premises
- hiring advertising space on the premises
- entries in the trade fair catalogue and the information system
- matchmaking offers

All contractors commissioned by the organiser will issue invoices directly to the exhibiting company.

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Services which can be commissioned either via the organiser or contractors commissioned by the organiser or directly on the open market, include:

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- stand construction: stands for hire
- stand equipment: furniture, kitchen equipment, flooring, lighting etc. for hire
- audio/video technology
- graphic design and signs
- plants and flowers
- catering
- staff: hosts, interpreters, temporary staff etc.
- accommodation
- insurance
- photo service

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### Catalogue and information systems

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The registration forms for the trade fair catalogue and the electronic information systems are usually sent upon official approval or made available online. It is important to note the relatively early deadline, as the information is made available for visitors to prepare for the trade fair visit a few weeks before the event.

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In the catalogue and the electronic information system, entries are usually made according to three criteria: alphabetically by company name (possibly with a short summary of the service offered), by goods list or nomenclature and by halls with corresponding hall plan. If necessary, the exhibiting company can register itself under several product groups for a fee. Logos or trademarks are often also included in the catalogue for a fee. Adverts can also be included.

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## Budget and cost planning

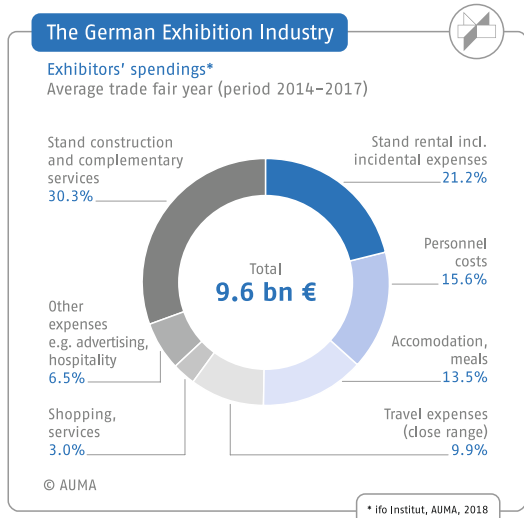
Marketing budgets are investments in the future of your company and are planned for the long, medium and short term according to the company and marketing objectives. Trade fair participation is also part of this. The exact project budget is usually planned in the year of trade fair attendance and should ideally be based on the goals and measures of the project. This not only creates a direct connection between the objective and the purpose of the financial resources, but also forms the basis for effective monitoring of success (► Chapter 10 Follow-up and performance review).

### Cost factors of trade fair participation

The main costs are the following items:

- basic costs: stand hire including additional costs on the premises
- stand construction, design and equipment
- other expenses: communication, catering
- transport and disposal
- personnel and travel expenses

The cost types mentioned are differentiated in more detail in the trade fair cost checklist, which provides an overview of the expected costs. In various surveys, AUMA has additionally calculated or extrapolated the average costs of trade fair participation.



All of these cost figures primarily reflect the situation of the companies that have participated in the relevant surveys. For comparison and planning purposes, they are of course only indicative data, which in individual cases can also deviate significantly from the individual costs incurred by a company.

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## Trade fair costs checklist

### Basic costs

- ▶ Registration and stand hire
- ▶ Stand utilities (electricity, water, compressed air, telephone and internet etc.)
- ▶ Other basic costs charged by the organiser (tickets, cleaning, etc.)
- ▶ Insurance

### Costs for stand design, construction, equipment

- ▶ Stand design (design, construction planning)
- ▶ Stand construction
- ▶ Stand equipment (furniture, kitchen equipment, etc.)
- ▶ Exhibits and models (new)
- ▶ Graphic design (stand signage, photos, texts etc.)
- ▶ Technical equipment
- ▶ Decoration
- ▶ Plants and flowers
- ▶ Depreciation

### Costs for stand service and communication

- ▶ Stand service and catering
- ▶ Equipment
- ▶ Communication (invitations, advertisements, give-aways, catalogue entry, entrance vouchers for visitors, etc.)
- ▶ Press activities (press conference, press kit)
- ▶ Telephone and Internet

### Costs for transport, handling and disposal

- ▶ Transport
- ▶ Transport handling at the exhibition venue
- ▶ Storage of empty goods at the exhibition venue
- ▶ Customs fees
- ▶ Insurance
- ▶ Waste disposal

### Personnel / travel expenses

- ▶ External personnel (staff to provide information, such as hosts and hostesses, interpreters, auxiliary staff)
  - Fees
  - Travel and food expenses
- ▶ In-house staff
  - Fees
  - Travel and food expenses
- ▶ Equipment (clothing, name tags, etc.)
- ▶ Training for the stand crew
- ▶ Food and drink outside the stand

### Other costs

- ▶ Market research (surveys)
- ▶ Other unspecified costs

### Basic costs

### Costs for design, stand construction, equipment

### Costs for stand service and communication

### Costs for transport, handling and disposal

### Personnel/travel expenses

### Other costs

- ▶
- TOTAL COST



## Cost effectiveness of trade fair participation

### AUMA trade fair benefit check

More and more companies want to calculate the cost-benefit ratio of their trade fair participation more precisely. However, because small and medium-sized companies in particular often do not formulate exact trade fair targets or only take the trade fair turnover as a basis for their calculations, the benefits of investments are often not sufficiently determined, so the costs thus come to the fore. AUMA has therefore developed the AUMA fair benefit check in close coordination with the exhibiting industry and the trade fair organisers (► Chapter 10 Follow-up and performance review).

## Promotion of trade fair participation

### ... for German companies

The federal government and the federal states support German companies in their trade fair participation at home and abroad. To this end, they provide substantial financial resources from public funds every year. With special support programmes, they facilitate better marketing of products and services, easier entry for German companies into domestic and foreign markets and technical and organisational support for exhibiting companies.

In order for you and your company to benefit from these public support programmes, certain conditions must be met. Here we give you an overview of the different sources of support for trade fairs in Germany and abroad.

► [www.auma.de/en/exhibit/public-funding](http://www.auma.de/en/exhibit/public-funding)

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## Scheduling / workflow planning for trade fair participation

Months until the start of the trade fair



### 1. Decision-making phase

- ▶ **Compilation of the company data**
  - ▶ information on the company philosophy, history, tradition
  - ▶ information on corporate identity
  - ▶ information on position on the market
  - ▶ information on developments and innovations
  - ▶ corporate, marketing and sales goals
- ▶ **Selection of the trade fair**
  - ▶ comparison of different trade fairs on the market
  - ▶ Obtaining information about AUMA, associations, chambers etc.
  - ▶ possibly visit the trade fairs for orientation
  - ▶ selection of the right trade fair according to visitor structure and nomenclature
- ▶ **Concept design and registration**
- ▶ **Development of the rough concept (for determining the stand size)**
  - ▶ determination of the trade fair objectives
  - ▶ planning of the main themes and exhibits
  - ▶ planning of the space required for visitor services
- ▶ **Coordination of general planning at the company**
- ▶ **Decision to take part in the trade fair**
- ▶ **Determination of responsibilities / trade fair team**
- ▶ **Registration of participation at the trade fair with the organiser**  
(please be sure to observe the registration deadline for the trade fair)
  - ▶ request and fill in the registration documents
  - ▶ define stand size and type



### 2. Planning phase

- ▶ **Scheduling and workflow control planning**
- ▶ **Budget planning/cost calculation**
- ▶ **Personnel deployment planning**
  - ▶ selection of stand personnel
  - ▶ booking of hotel rooms
  - ▶ travel planning



### 3. Organisation phase

- ▶ **Registration of the stand services with the organiser (according to the schedule)**
  - ▶ electricity, water, compressed air, IT
  - ▶ trade fair information systems, catalogue entry
- ▶ **Selection, briefing and commissioning of service providers**
  - ▶ stand construction, model construction, graphics, transport, catering, give-aways etc.
- ▶ **Exhibits**
  - ▶ determination and production of exhibits and models
- ▶ **Transport planning**
  - ▶ commissioning of carrier services
  - ▶ ordering of lifting equipment on site
- ▶ **Design and printing of the information and brochure material**
- ▶ **Layout and production of the stand graphics**



- ▶ **Announcement of trade fair participation and invitations**
  - ▶ announcement in all relevant media
  - ▶ announcement on your own website
  - ▶ personalised invitations
  - ▶ public relations work
- ▶ **Travel planning**
  - ▶ air/rail ticket orders
  - ▶ confirmation of hotel rooms
- ▶ **Stand personnel**
  - ▶ planning of the kick-off event for the stand personnel
  - ▶ equipment of the stand personnel (clothing, name tags)
- ▶ **Ordering of stand catering**
- ▶ **Preparation of the documents for recording any conversations**



- 4. Implementation phase**
- ▶ **Supervision of set-up work**
  - ▶ **Supervision of deliveries**
  - ▶ **Customs clearances (import), where applicable**
  - ▶ **Sign-off inspection of all services by the project management**
  - ▶ **Control of stand-by services during the trade fair**
  - ▶ **Storage of empty containers**
  - ▶ **Handover of the stand to the stand management**



- ▶ **Customer and VIP care**
- ▶ **Hospitality for guests**
- ▶ **Documentation of the discussions**
- ▶ **Observation of the competition**
- ▶ **Documentation of the stand (photos, films)**



- ▶ **Removal/delivery of empty containers**
- ▶ **Supervision of dismantling work**
- ▶ **Customs clearances (export), where applicable**
- ▶ **Return transport**



- 5. Follow-up phase**
- ▶ **Follow-up with trade fair leads**
  - ▶ **Billing and cost control**
  - ▶ **Performance review**
    - ▶ goal achievement
  - ▶ **Debriefing**
  - ▶ **Final report and documentation of the event**
  - ▶ **Decision to participate in the next trade fair**

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## Scheduling

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### Schedule and workflow planning

The schedule is determined individually for each trade fair participation. On the one hand, it depends on how often the trade fair is held and the deadline for registration, and on the other hand on the scope of the project and the internal planning it involves. In the schedule and workflow planning, all activities are defined in chronological order, broken down by task. The time required is also included. All key dates to be planned in advance, including the construction and dismantling dates specified by the organiser, are recorded with the date of completion and the responsible parties. A plan to be drawn up contains all the relevant aspects that are essential in the context of good preparation for participation in the trade fair:

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The entire time required before the trade fair is determined by the sequence of all activities, starting with the selection of the trade fair and the trade fair themes (internally), through the planning and implementation of the stand, right down to personnel deployment planning.

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The needs and activity planning for the implementation of all measures and activities, which must be drawn up in parallel, is closely linked to the scheduling.

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### Organisation of trade fair participation

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After preparation and planning comes the organisation of the actual participation in the trade fair. The organisation of participation at a trade fair is divided into three phases:

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- planning and organisation (► Chapters 1–6)
- stand personnel and operation (► Chapters 8–9)
- follow-up and performance review (► Chapter 10)

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Even if the date of the trade fair is still a long way away, sufficient time must be allocated for the planning. In particular, the preliminary concept prior to registration must be prepared in good time to determine the size of the stand, to reserve the required hotel rooms early and to ensure the timely selection and commissioning of the service providers so that no unnecessary bottlenecks and surcharges arise in production and delivery





## Selection of service companies

Putting the planned participation in a trade fair into practice involves a variety of different actions and project sections. These can either be commissioned via the organiser's partners or directly through the professional providers of trade fair and event services.

These include:

- event and marketing agencies
- stand construction companies
- trade fair architects and designers
- special agencies for digital investment opportunities
- graphic design agencies
- lighting and sound technology companies
- model construction companies
- transport/customs companies
- catering companies

All providers of trade fair and event services offer advice, prepare offers according to the briefing, carry out the order planning, procure the materials, plan their personnel, produce, deliver to the venue and carry out the assembly and dismantling.

The respective enquiry and subsequent commissioning is all based around a comprehensive written briefing, containing all the information on the individual task and the general conditions to be observed.

## Stand planning

The basis of the stand planning is the conceptual implementation of the participation objectives in connection with: the placement in the hall, the floor plan of the stand as well as the primary direction in which visitors to the trade fair move, the hall entrance and transition points, and the companies on adjacent stands, where applicable.

It is also important to observe all the technical guidelines, such as height, distances, use of materials and fire safety. (See also ► Registration, size of the stand, stand types and stand location).

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The following points are taken into account when planning the stand:

- placement, floor plan and room layout
- stand construction
- stand design and equipment
  - Graphic design
  - Colour and lighting
  - Fixtures and furniture
  - Material selection
- presentation of the exhibits

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### Stand architecture

The trade fair stand represents the exhibiting company, and its size and equipment should reflect its importance and the objectives of its appearance at the respective trade fair as well as stand out from the competition. It should support the communication of the stand crew, provide information appropriate to the target group and create the right atmosphere.

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The following challenges must be overcome:

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- presentation of the company
- communication of messages and topics
- live presentation of products and brand worlds
- spatial organisation of meetings with the visitors to the stand

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The implementation of the architecture and design includes the following decisions:

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- hire, lease or purchase of the stand
- stand construction
- self-construction or commissioned construction

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For companies that are participating in a trade fair for the first time, hiring a stand is a particularly good idea, as this usually requires the least organisational effort. Purchasing or leasing a stand should be considered if elements of the stand or its equipment are to be used after the event. Purchasing results in a number of follow-up costs, for example for storage, transport, maintenance and upkeep, as well as handling costs. Thus, the decision between hiring and buying the materials is not simply a matter of budget or price, but of a total cost comparison. As an alternative to purchasing, leasing can be advantageous from a financial and tax point of view.



The organisers themselves or contractors commissioned by them offer system stands for hire in different sizes and with basic equipment, which can be supplemented with further hired furniture or your own equipment. The hire price includes assembly and dismantling as well as transport.

## Stand construction

When deciding between a system stand or conventional construction, it should be borne in mind that a stand construction to be used several times is more economical and often more environmentally friendly (► Chapter 6 Sustainable trade fair participation: challenges and benefits). The system construction is based on prefabricated components, which are individually assembled and can be used flexibly, while at the same time allowing for great creative scope in terms of design. There are many suppliers of sophisticated trade fair construction systems with one or two-story designs.

The main advantages of system construction are:

- low-cost, pre-fabricated, precisely fitting parts
- well suited for transport and storage
- low personnel requirements and time required to set up and dismantle the stand
- simple tool for assembly and dismantling
- versatility and adaptability

Stand construction using a conventional or unique approach is mostly dependent on the size of the stand, your trade fair programme or the size of the exhibits and the individuality of your concept. Conventional design allows individual design requests and requirements to be specifically realised. The combination of system construction and conventional construction is widely used and combines individual requirements with time-saving and cost-saving advantages.

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## Self-construction or commissioned construction

There are different options for implementing stand construction:

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- the stand is manufactured in-house
- an events agency is used as a general contractor
- a stand building company is used as a general contractor
- an architect and a trade fair stand building company are commissioned together
- an architect is entrusted with the task of searching for and deploying tradesmen by means of a call for tenders

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### Self-construction

**Advantages:** No planning costs, you can use your own tradesmen.  
**Disadvantages:** Shortcomings due to lack of experience in design and implementation.

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### Events agency as a general contractor

**Advantages:** Creation of a concept for the overall appearance, creative performance and implementation of all measures from a single source.  
**Disadvantages:** Often no choice among service partners for implementation and thus no cost comparison.

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### Trade fair stand building company as a general contractor

**Advantages:** Creative service (stand design), stand construction and equipment from a single source. Full-service in the implementation of all measures. **Disadvantages:** No distinction between creative service and implementation and thus predominantly combined cost structure. Often bound by a specific system or specific materials.

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### Architect and stand building company

**Advantages:** High level of creativity, because the creative service is not tied to a specific system or specific materials. The stand building company can be determined by means of an invitation to tender. **Disadvantages:** Different contacts can mean more time is required.

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### Architect and tradesmen

**Advantages:** High level of creative service combined with cost-effective implementation, due to the possibility of separate tendering for individual project sections. **Disadvantage:** Only worthwhile for large projects.

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## Stand design and stand equipment

The design of the stand should ensure that it looks as distinctive and typical of the company as possible as well as guarantee recognition. The first visual impression in connection with the products and services on offer plays a decisive role in whether the visitor approaches the stand or simply keeps walking past it.

Visitor guidance must be taken into account here. Visitors to the trade fair go through four stages before they talk to you:

1. they orient themselves
2. they inform themselves
3. they understand and are interested
4. they want to communicate

This means that the stand design gives interested parties orientation: what is this about and what benefits do the products and services on offer provide? Themes and products are clearly identifiable and readily recognisable and highlight the benefits to the trade fair visitors. The accompanying visual information contains short and precise statements to make visitors curious and leads them to start a conversation with the stand personnel.

The resulting personal contact, the face-to-face communication, provides more in-depth information about the products and services on offer, shows what your company is capable of, will be remembered even after the visit to the trade fair and may well result in a business transaction.

### Graphic design

The first, often emotional impression is influenced by the design of the stand. However, the first cognitive information is provided based on the graphic design, the effect of which should not be underestimated. Visitors primarily perceive things through their eyes, and in view of the visual information overload a visitor experiences on a single day at a trade fair, the motto is: less is more.

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The visualisation of information by means of texts, graphic representations, and still and moving images is part of the stand design and fulfils the following tasks:

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- ensuring recognition (for example, through the company logo and key visuals)
- drawing attention and piquing curiosity (for example, with eye-catchers, large images and moving images)
- rapid perception of optical information (for example, through headlines, photos, graphics, symbols)

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At the same time, the graphic design is divided into:

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- impression from afar
- close-up impression
- product and detail identification

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Once inside the hall, visitors should be able to find the stand as soon as possible. In addition to the size and location of the stand, the **impression visitors get from afar** includes the positioning of the company logo, key visuals and the company-specific colour design. At the stand, the range of topics should then quickly be recognisable and clearly presented.

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In this way, the **close-up impression** creates a topic-based framework and provides incentives to learn more without obstructing detailed statements, which allows the staff to go into greater detail in the course of a face-to-face conversation.

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**Product and detailed information** is limited to the essentials (e.g. product identification/designation), as long texts and complicated presentations are not read by visitors to the stand. This is where the face-to-face conversation starts.

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When implementing graphic design, special attention must be paid to:

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- specific features of the local culture, ethnicity and religions
- the psychological effect of colours
- how visitors to the stand read the information
- the viewing distance
- the language used

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The use of audio-visual media and an internet connection are described separately in ► Chapter 5 Digital enhancements and hybrid trade fair participation.



## Colour scheme and lighting

The colour scheme of the trade fair stand is part of the stand concept and is of great importance, as colours, in addition to the company logo and typography, characterise the company's appearance and are a key part of the corporate design. Colours contribute to recognition and memory, have a symbolic character, influence the mood/atmosphere at the stand, and can be used for orientation and guidance, as well as for showcasing exhibits.

The same applies to the lighting or the use of light, which can also be used for design, orientation and atmosphere.

The lighting used at the stand can be distinguished as follows:

- light to see – this refers to the general illumination of the stand. For example, the installation of basic lighting or the generation of a general room brightness.
- light for a closer look – this refers to object lighting as well as the formation of light islands to increase the awareness and staging of exhibits.

## Stand materials

In the broadest sense, the stand materials include all the materials that make up the stand, as well as those that are used for the decoration and furnishing of the stand.

- flooring: velour, PVC, laminate, wood etc.
- wall material: chipboard, wood, glass, stainless steel, fabrics, slides etc.
- system construction material: Aluminium

In addition, materials are used for the assembly and dismantling of the stand (such as cover films). All materials must be certified as "flame retardant" in accordance with the safety regulations. The use and variety of materials in the design of the stand depend on the objectives of participation, the budget and, last but not least, on the company's presentation and exhibits. If the exhibiting company has a keen sense of its environmental responsibility and also wants to express this at trade fairs, all materials used should be in line with that philosophy (► Chapter 6 Sustainable trade fair participation: challenges and benefits).

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### Fixtures and furniture

The furniture is part of the equipment and its style, colour and quality are adapted to the stand design in the presentation and meeting areas. The fixtures and furniture mainly includes:

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- information counters
- meeting tables and chairs
- bar counter and bar stools
- lounge furniture
- lockable cabinets and display cases
- shelves and lockers
- kitchen equipment
- office equipment

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The furniture is offered either by the stand building company together with the stand construction or by hire furniture suppliers who specialise in a wide range of different products and designs.

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### Selection and presentation of the exhibits

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The definition of your trade fair programme should be in line with your marketing and sales objectives, as well as the individual trade fair objectives of the exhibiting company.

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The trade fair programme essentially shows the current range of products in relation to the visitor target group, any new developments and innovations. Exhibits are the attraction at every stand. They not only show the range live, but also create an experience through staging.

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The main event here is the interactive participation of stand visitors in the presentation of products and exhibits. The benefits of interaction and real-world presentation are diverse:

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- it attracts more attention
- active engagement with the product is increased
- the information is transmitted through all the senses in a tangible way
- the experience is remembered for longer
- the stay at the stand is extended
- face-to-face conversations go into more detail

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The presentation of the exhibits includes the clarification of the following questions:

- which products from the current product range are relevant to the target group?
- is the entire product range shown or just a selection?
- were product improvements made or did any receive a facelift?
- which new products are on display or ready for market?
- which products should be specifically highlighted?
- are there any awards or quality seals that can be presented?
- how can the benefits be presented?
- should trade fair models be produced (true-to-measure enlargements or reductions, sectional models etc.)?
- which additional information must be prepared?
- are the exhibits visually attractive (size, equipment, colour)?
- how can the visual effect be enhanced (colour, light, decoration)?
- can the exhibits be presented in a freely accessible way or do small parts, for example, have to be protected from unauthorised access (breakage, theft)?
- should the products be showcased and how much space is required for this?
- which auxiliary and operating equipment is necessary for this (electricity, compressed air etc.)?
- how can services be demonstrated?

## Plagiarism at German trade fairs

Trade fairs are a mirror of the market. They bring together the range of products and services on offer in an industry in a greater concentration than anywhere else in the world. Thus, trade fairs provide a comprehensive market overview for the visitors, but also for the exhibitors themselves. There is no better place to compare your own products with those of your competitors than at trade fairs. Therefore, it is not surprising that time and time again, exhibitors find out about plagiarised versions of their products for the first time at trade fairs.

### When are imitations illegal?

In Germany, the principle of freedom to imitate applies. This means that in principle anyone can imitate the products, processes and trademarks of a third party. Only holders of special industrial property rights can prohibit third parties from the reproduction and commercial use of their protected products or trademarks. In addition to the production, holders of industrial

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property rights may also prohibit distribution by third parties or the mere offering or promotion of the counterfeit products. In addition, they can demand that the plagiarists refrain from infringing the industrial property rights and claim damages for goods already sold. They have a right to information about the origin of the products and can even seek the destruction of existing products.

### What are industrial property rights?

Industrial property rights include:

**Patents:** These are granted for inventions which are new, based on an inventive activity and which are commercially applicable. A patent grants the inventor the right to prevent others from using, producing, selling or importing their invention for a specified period of time. In return, the inventor must disclose the details of their invention in a patent specification that is accessible to everyone.

**Utility model:** As with the patent, the subject matter of a utility model application must be new, based on an inventive activity and commercially applicable. Utility models can be registered faster and more cost-effectively than patents. However, the registration is carried out without any substantive examination for novelty and the existence of an inventive step. Therefore, the registered utility model can actually be fictitious protection, which cannot be enforced in the event of a conflict.

**Trademark:** Trademarks can be any signs, in particular words, illustrations or presentations, which are capable of distinguishing goods or services of one company from those of other companies.

**Registered design:** Registered designs protect the colours and shapes of products that can be manufactured industrially or by artisan craftsmen. As with utility models, however, the German Patent and Trademark Office (DPMA) does not check whether the registered design actually meets the material protection requirements (in particular novelty and unique character).

For many trade fairs in Germany, what is known as trade fair priority can be claimed when registering utility models, trademarks and registered designs. If an exhibitor registers industrial property rights to an exhibit they have shown at a trade fair with the DPMA after this trade fair has come to an end, the first day of the trade fair will in this case represent the filing date with the DPMA on which the industrial property rights are based. For this purpose, a trade fair certificate prepared by the trade fair management at



the start of the trade fair must be submitted to the DPMA together with the registration documents. It is also a prerequisite that the registration of the industrial property rights takes place within six months of the first presentation. The relevant trade fairs are regularly published in the German Federal Gazette of Law.

### **What can I do before the start of the trade fair?**

In the run-up to a trade fair, there are measure you can take to avoid any nasty surprises later on. Firstly, you should contact a lawyer. You must have industrial property rights to effectively protect a product or brand against imitators. You should bring all documents that prove that you are the owner of the industrial property right (originals or certified copies of the property right certificate as well as any injunctions or judgements against plagiarists already obtained) to the trade fair. Make sure that you can also contact a lawyer at the venue of the event, on weekends if necessary.

If you have any specific information that a competitor wants to exhibit imitations of your protected products, you can apply for border seizure proceedings before the trade fair. By means of border seizure, the customs authorities can then withdraw the goods infringing the protection right from circulation – even after they have crossed the border.

### **What can I do during the trade fair?**

If you discover at a trade fair that a plagiarised version of your protected products is being exhibited, you can first send a warning to the imitator with the support of your lawyer and ask them to sign a cease-and-desist declaration subject to a criminal penalty. If the imitator does not wish to sign such a statement, you can use a court injunction to prohibit the trade fair of infringing products.

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**What can I do if I do not have industrial property rights?**

In exceptional cases, the imitation of goods can be illegal even without any industrial property rights for this purpose, under the provisions of the German Act against Unfair Competition. This requires that an entrepreneur imitates a competitor's product with a competitive character and offers it on the market. In addition, there must be special circumstances that make the conduct of the entrepreneur appear unfair. Only if these strict conditions are met will the principle of freedom to imitate be broken by this protection of performance under competition law.

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**What can the trade fair organiser do?**

The trade fair organisers in Germany are happy to help make your trade fair appearance a success. Therefore, you should inform the organisers before legal disputes occur at the exhibition centre/venue. Only in this way can they settle a dispute as an intermediary.

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However, the organisers cannot assert your rights against third parties, as they are not the owner of the industrial property rights. If no enforceable title is presented to them, they generally cannot close any exhibitors' stands.

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More information is available from:

- German Patent and Trademark Office: ► [dpma.de](https://www.dpma.de)
- Central Office for Industrial Property: ► [grenzbeschlagnahme.de](https://www.grenzbeschlagnahme.de)
- German Chamber of Patent Lawyers: ► [patentanwalt.de](https://www.patentanwalt.de)
- Aktionskreis Produkt- und Markenpiraterie: ► [markenpiraterie-apm.de](https://www.markenpiraterie-apm.de)

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**Stand set-up and dismantling**

The stand set-up and dismantling times are specified by the organiser and are included in the price per square metre. An extension can be requested from the organiser and will then be subject to separate charge. However, this is only possible if another event is not already scheduled to take place at the site or in the hall.

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Set-up and dismantling times are usually only a few days long and require precise planning and time allocation. This is where all the different project sections come together and all service companies meet. The division of the work should be discussed in advance with all the service providers and internal employees involved. Changes and deviations can quickly result in loss of time and additional costs. An experienced staff member of the exhibiting company should be on-site as the point of contact during assembly and



dismantling in order to monitor the process and the execution of the work and to be able to make quick decisions in case of modifications. On the day before the start of the trade fair, a sign-off inspection of all work must be planned and the handover of the stand documented.

During dismantling, special care must be taken to ensure that the exhibits and the stand materials are not damaged or worse stolen in the rush and in the confusion.

## Transportation, logistics and customs clearance

The right things in the right place at the right time! Accurate transport planning and handling is closely linked to the entire scheduling process. During the set-up period, all materials from all service providers are delivered and required in the correct order. Coordination of the timely delivery is absolutely necessary so that the assembly process can be carried out smoothly and materials do not get in the way.

A second area to focus on is the transport planning of the company's own materials (stand materials, equipment, exhibits etc.). It begins with production, preparation and completion. Depending on the completion date, the mode of transport (lorry, train, flight, ship) is planned and budgeted. Delays often result in a change in the type of transport and thus in higher costs.

It should all run smoothly! If the materials are not available at the right time, this puts the entire trade fair appearance at risk. Therefore, we recommend hiring an experienced trade fair carrier.

Transport planning includes the following points:

- planning the type of transport: lorry, train, ship, plane
- decision on the transport option:
  - individual transport, additional cargo, collective transport
- determination of the transport duration (including customs clearance)
- determination of the freight volume: height, weight, value
- selection and requirements for transport packaging:
  - cardboard boxes, crates, pallets, containers
- clarification of country-specific customs procedures:
  - inside/outside the EU
- obtaining import regulations and permits for specific goods (for example, medical, food, defence technology)
- processing of censorship requests for media information carriers

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- provision of the freight documents including translations: cargo lists, proforma invoices, customs documents, shipping tables, contact details
- storage of the empty containers at the exhibition venue
- slot planning and registration of lifting equipment for set-up and dismantling on site

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For security and organisational reasons, on-site carriers (contractors commissioned by the organisers) are responsible for unloading and transport at the exhibition centre/venue premises. In addition, the on-site carrier will provide lifting equipment and storage space at the site upon timely registration by the exhibiting companies. As with all contractors commissioned by the organisers, the on-site carriers have an office at the exhibition centre/venue and will be on site throughout the entire set-up and dismantling period as well as the duration of the trade fair so that they can respond to issues quickly.

### Customs clearance

Exhibition centre/venue are sovereign territory for customs purposes. This means that goods delivered or exhibited there are not subject to any import duties if they are returned to their country of origin after the fair. At international trade fairs, the customs office of the importing country is often directly represented at the exhibition centre/venue and controls imports and exports on the basis of freight and customs documents, and unseals or seals imports and exports.

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When an experienced carrier is commissioned to carry out international transport, the carrier also handles the customs formalities and advises the exhibiting companies.

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Further information on the customs treatment of goods is available from

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### Germany Trade and Invest

office@gtai.com  
www.gtai.com

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## 5. Digital enhancements and hybrid trade fair participation

The trade fair and you as an exhibiting company live off the physical presentation of newly developed products and interpersonal exchanges. Participation at trade fairs continues to develop. Multi-sensor technology plays a crucial role. Physical presence as well as personal sales are complemented by suitable digital components.

We will now look at just two models:

- **Physical trade fair participation with digital enhancements**  
The exhibiting company and the visitors are present in person in this event format. Personal exchange and interpersonal communication about real products are characteristic of this model. Digital tools make it easier for exhibiting companies and their visitors to communicate and illustrate product applications.
- **Hybrid trade fair participation**  
This format enables visitors and exhibitors to communicate both digitally and in person. Communication with the visitors, who participate digitally, is based on previously defined and measurable data points.

The following applies to both models:

- Products are shown in augmented reality on (touch)screens and touch pads, and enhanced by augmented reality, virtual reality or mixed reality through the digital space, in some cases also in connection with gaming applications.
- Leads are created in a variety of ways – on paper, on a laptop, or in an app on a smartphone or touch pad.
- Streaming and chats enable visitors to the trade fair to receive additional information on site and digitally, and expand the range of possibilities for contacting the stand staff.
- The preparation and follow-up work for the trade fair appearance as well as the associated communication measures are, for the most part, carried out digitally.

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These models are characterised by the fact that the boundaries can flow smoothly into each other. While they use existing tools, the challenge is to put together the tools individually in order to be successful in the end. Under this premise, hybrid trade fair participation has decisive benefits. As an exhibiting company, you have the opportunity to completely personalise your brand communication with digital tools.

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## Relevant touchpoints

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Every day, as part of a purchase transaction, we come into contact with anchor points, known as touchpoints, as parts of a previously defined process – the customer journey. Touchpoints are anchor points, experiences, encounters and processes where interested parties and customers come into contact with products of a company or its employees. This happens, for example, when buying products. There are three options: either purely analogue, purely digital or a mixture of both. In this way, you can also get in contact with your leads at a trade fair and that is also how trade fair advertising works.

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### Making contact

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- recommendations from acquaintances
- linear radio or television advertising
- print advertising
- website
- email
- social selling
- social media
- app
- online shop
- chat bots
- webshop
- newsroom
- newsletters
- complaints
- satisfaction surveys, survey

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advertising

- website or app
- digital signage
- DooH (Digital out of Home)
- streaming services such as Netflix etc.
- social media
- employee advertising
- email marketing
- newsletters
- blog
- white paper
- affiliate marketing
- survey

So the hybrid world is nothing new and is already omnipresent. In this scenario, trade fairs with physical product presentations are enhanced and extended to include digitally perceptible product worlds. These different levels of presentation are made available individually to visitors on site as well as to participants who are digitally present.

The exhibitor's sales department has a number of tools at its disposal to support its success or to make that success measurable:

- marketing automation
- business intelligence (BI) tools
- predictive analytics
- digital collection of customer data
- conference tools (MS teams, Zoom, Zoho, Adobe Connect etc.)

For interactive product marketing at the trade fair stand, there are numerous digital tools to make the user experience with interaction an effective and sustainable experience:

- augmented reality (AR)/virtual reality (VR)/mixed reality (XR)
- kinetics
- LED walls, interactive
- (multi) touch screens
- live streaming, and
- combinations of the various tools and contact points to create an individual experience.

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## Briefing event format

Hybrid trade fair participation opens up new opportunities for you. You present your company and your products or services for everyone in a comprehensible way before, during and after the actual trade fair in an effective and focused way. It is important to select the appropriate tools in a goal-oriented manner in order to achieve the greatest possible success. The right composition and the right interplay between the story, tools and content are the key to success. The combination options for the tools are varied.

Therefore, you should proceed step-by-step:

- first define the needs of your target group.
- how do you want to reach the target group?
- now set your goals.
- assign suitable weightings to your goals.
- determine the right social media platform for you.
- can you access existing content?
- summarise your company's content on a single platform, known as a content hub.
- check which formats are compatible with the requirements of the social media platforms you select.

## Goals

Use metrics to define your goals. They are essential for demonstrating the success of your approach and the concepts implemented after the event (► Chapter 2 Objectives of trade fair participation).

Any consideration about a hybrid participation in the trade fair is therefore preceded by the definition of the previously defined goals.

Here are some suggestions for fundamental questions you should ask yourself about your goals:

- what do you hope to achieve with the digital content?
- when should you start producing the content?
- which products do you want to focus on to a greater extent in the digital space and do you want them to be available beyond the trade fair?
- where does the content for the digital platforms come from?
- which groups of people would be the right people to share and distribute contributions?



- which social media and/or event platform is right for you? 1
- how do you want to communicate digitally enhanced products on the platforms? 1
- how can you reach your customers in this way? 2
- which story might be right for you to frame the topic? 2
- who forms the core team responsible for digitalisation and the hybrid trade fair presence at your company? 3
- what budget do you have for digital or hybrid solutions? 4
- which key figures for the measurability of your goals are the most relevant for you to get started? 5

## Facilitating networking

To bring the participating and exhibiting companies together, we need to understand what drives people to participate, co-create, and interact.

- the content should follow a single thread in the overall context of the trade fair participation. 6
- sales and presentation teams must be trained on hybrid presentation in order to engage visitors and digital attendees and also to be able to respond confidently to hardware problems. 7
- hold a Q&A session to actively involve the visitors in the (online) event. 8
- gamification is a great way of involving online users in order to fill breaks or to prepare participants for the upcoming session during a presentation using voting or other interaction tools. 9
- encourage participants to post on social media platforms with a hashtag you have created. This also increases the traffic to your profile. Holding a little quiz and announcing a prize on the same day is a good way of generating more content that can be posted. 10
- invite the participants to share a meal, attend a final key note speech, or perhaps you could put on a show to extend the time that visitors stay at your stand. A1
- report about your event online. A2
- make use of the possibilities of a call-to-action.
- allow online users to re-watch content after the event.

### Tools for your trade fair participation

- 1 Streaming
- 2 Augmented reality/virtual reality/mixed reality
- 3 Virtual trade fair stand or digital twin
- 4 Break-out sessions
- 5 Digital whiteboards
- 6 Captions for screen sharing
- 7 Gamification
- 8 Touch screens
- 9 Apps
- 10 Visitor tracking via Wi-Fi hotspots
- A1 LED walls, interactive
- A2 Gesture recognition
- Matchmaking platform of the exhibition company and the organiser
- QR code

## Technology

With hybrid trade fair participation, you can make use of proven technologies. Only the context and the story have changed.

Platform, content hub:

This platform brings together all of your content, including graphics for online and print media, films and social media posts. That way you and your colleagues always have access to a central platform and an orderly system.

The cherry on top: your participation in the trade fair will get a real boost if you connect the above-mentioned tools with one another and with your social media channels. Build a coherent storyline – a common thread – for your sustained success.



## Digitalisation and sustainability

Digitalisation is thought to go hand in hand with sustainability. But when you look closer, things get a little more complicated.

- content hosting and the listed tools rely on server farms from cloud providers.
- every farm run by the big suppliers uses as much electricity as a major city.
- the production, the processing of the content as well as the travel expenses of the participating teams increase the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint accordingly.
- the cloud server can be accessed from the office, mobile office or from your sofa at home.

These are the great benefits for you and the environment:

- reduction of worldwide travel expenses by digital participants.
- long-term use of digital content.
- quick corrections and adjustments of the content – on demand.
- access to centrally stored content from all corporate divisions.
- digital content is always sent to customers in accordance with target groups and on demand.
- comprehensive data and information about the participants.
- stringent sales process.

Hybrid trade fair participation is a marathon, not a sprint. However, hybrid trade fairs stand out because they offer the possibility of permanently adapting a medium or long-term strategy and the presentation of your company in both the physical and digital space.

**Tip:** You can find out how you can make your trade fair participation more sustainable in ► Chapter 6 Sustainable trade fair participation: benefits and challenges.

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## 6. Sustainable trade fair participation: challenges and benefits

Many believe digitalisation, virtual and hybrid event formats and phygital (physical + digital) trade fairs to be the Holy Grail of sustainability. The shift toward digital formats is clearly noticeable, but is not necessarily sustainable. The work effort, the large-scale energy consumption of server farms and the use of rapidly ageing electronics, however, are outweighed by the long-term use of content, a reduction of international travel (traffic) and resource-saving production. It is only through a holistic and sustainable participation in trade fairs that companies can find the ideal medium to communicate and disseminate sustainable business models in a credible manner and also to attract new customers.

### Tip: Digitalisation and sustainability

The digitalisation of individual components in the communication mix of your trade fair participation will play an increasingly important role. To help you get your bearings, you will find tips in ► Chapter 5 Digital enhancements and hybrid trade fair participation.

### Which aspects of sustainability are becoming increasingly relevant?

- individuality of stands and presentations despite the reuse of elements plays an important role.
- trade fair stands have a multifunctional design for on-site and hybrid implementation.
- local public transport and railways are integrated into the exhibitors' transport concept.
- the design of trade fair stands is planned to be scalable and reusable in order to be able to accommodate different venue geometries.
- reusing trade fair furniture or components is becoming the norm and having a positive impact on costs.
- transport volumes are bundled, also reducing packaging waste.
- architecture is turning into "mediatecture": media technology is integrated into the architecture. This reduces the amount of waste.
- large prints are replacing full-wall panels with eye-catching image motifs. Regular re-use saves materials and time for staff.



- coordination meetings with service providers are increasingly taking place online, as on-site meetings are replaced by conference tools. This reduces travel expenses before and after the trade fair.
- catering makes use of seasonal and regional food. Reusable crockery is used.
- the use of sustainably produced electricity has a positive effect on the energy balance.
- the use of recyclable and multi-use materials has a positive effect on the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint.

**Tip:** Full sustainability can only be achieved if everyone involved in the trade fair works towards it – exhibitors, organisers and stand builders. Everyone has to contribute to achieving the goals.

## Green trade fair stands

Sustainability and digitalisation are themes that are becoming increasingly important at trade fair stands.

The most important question in this context is: "Can you simplify sustainability and reduce your efforts to a few key points?" Yes, you can!

- perform a sustainability calculation. The certified members of the Federal Association of Event Management (FORWARD/fwd:) will help you with this. ► <https://forward.live/>
- look for a stand builder who is familiar with the topic of sustainability to act as a mentor and competent point of contact.
- if your company has CSR guidelines, refer to them in your internal specifications for the tender.
- renew your CSR-compliant requirements for your trade fair participation in small steps.
- begin with the arrangements for the designs. A lot of things can now be done online, without any need for travel. You can look at and even change designs online.
- limit the number of invitations to tender and the number of participating stand builders to a minimum.
- define metrics for your milestones to be able to compare costs and benefits.

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## How can you contribute to sustainability as an exhibiting company?

### Overview of relevant laws and initiatives

The CSR Directive Implementing Act  
 Recycling Act  
 Supply Chain Act  
 ISO 20121  
 Global Reporting Initiative (GRI)  
 Green Globe (MICE)  
 Sustainable Company (trade fair stand construction)  
 GHG Protocol  
 German Sustainability Code (DNK)  
 Climate Change Act  
 Transparency International Deutschland e.V.

Making your trade fair an economically measurable success is not unknown territory for you. When it comes to sustainability, you will face another challenge in addition to digitalisation. You are more in demand than ever in dealing with this cross-sectional task and can contribute your expertise to remain successful in the future. But maybe you will become even more successful? The following compilation provides you with an initial overview of the relevant laws, initiatives and guidelines.

From the perspective of exhibiting companies, there are compelling reasons to plan and implement your participation in the trade fair with sustainability in mind:

- you reduce the costs of preparation in the short term.
- you reduce costs by saving resources.
- sustainability becomes your competitive advantage if you succeed in convincing new target groups from generations Y, Z and Alpha.
- with CSR, you strengthen your brand, because you increase trust in your company – both internally and externally.
- you stay one step ahead of the competition.
- with a coherent sustainability strategy, you can make decisions that are geared towards long-term sustainability without any direct impact on profits that can be achieved in the short term.
- you increase employee satisfaction.

Holistic sustainability depends on several factors and influences, not least on management. For experienced trade fair organisers, the coherent interplay of key figures, sustainability, digitalisation and management requirements is the basis for long-term planning, evaluation and communication. As a professional, you can express the commercial aspects in the form of key figures and thus give sustainability in your company a decisive boost.





## Selecting the stand builder

How do you choose a suitable stand builder? As usual, your long-term participation in the trade fair begins at a very early stage of planning. In the course of the project development, the question of the right stand builder becomes key.

**Note:** In order to be able to prepare a credible offer, stand builders involve numerous suppliers.

**Tip:** Please note, therefore, that your CO<sub>2</sub> footprint as an exhibitor rises exponentially as the number of construction companies involved in the tender process increases. The topic of sustainability and corporate social responsibility (CSR) is therefore already of great importance during the tender phase.

### Suppliers in the field of classical trade fair stand construction

- Timber suppliers
- Carpenters
- Metalworkers
- Plastics processors
- Flooring providers and layers
- Media technology providers
- Printers for large-scale printing
- Hire furniture providers
- AR/VR specialists
- Lighting technology
- Rigging or truss providers
- Assembly personnel
- Transport companies and carriers

In order to enable you to select suitable stand builders, we recommend the Sustainable Company Initiative of the industry association fwd. There you will find suppliers who are committed to sustainability and who are re-certified at regular intervals.

**fwd: Industry Network for Fairs and Events** (German only)

► <https://forward.live/nachhaltigkeit/>

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If you do not want to move away from the stand builder you trust, we would like to support you with the following questions:

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- how sustainable is your stand builder?
- how sustainable is its supply chain?
- how sustainable are the materials used?
- does the stand building company use green electricity?
- what is the working time during assembly and dismantling?
- where are the company's headquarters?
- which country do the assembly companies and sub-suppliers come from?
- what do the answers mean for you and your sustainability goals?

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The topic of sustainability has become a cross-sectional social and economic task. The gradual and effective reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is in the hands of all parties involved.

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**Tip:** Therefore, please find out about this in great detail. Perhaps you have the option of visiting your stand builder and discussing the possibility of reducing CO<sub>2</sub> hotspots or compensating for their carbon footprint. Face-to-face discussions with the company management also give you the opportunity to raise awareness among all those involved. Guidelines are available to support you in your endeavour to gradually achieve CO<sub>2</sub> neutrality and to take into account the social criteria across the entire value chain.

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## 7. Communication and visitor marketing

Trade fair organisers spend a significant part of their budgets on visitor advertising. The communication work aims to achieve as broad a response as possible among the media and potential visitors.

**Tip:** The organiser advertises for the trade fair or individual focus areas, but not for individual companies. It is therefore up to you to promote your own participation in the run-up to the trade fair and to inspire the public to visit the stand.

It's about visitors. And the right ones. At the right time. In a sufficiently large number. Achieving this is the purpose of your communication concept, which forms the basis for properly functioning visitor marketing. It consists of all considerations and plans that affect your communication relating to the trade fair. The communication concept is the basis for concrete measures in the context of visitor marketing.

The most urgent questions that a trade fair communication concept must answer are:

- what do you want to communicate?
- how do you want to achieve this?

If exhibiting companies develop coherent concepts that are tailored to relevant target groups, the chances of encouraging them to visit the stand are good.

The first question addresses your key messages: What do you want to tell your target groups?

- These messages could be about your strengths on the market, your offerings, or something that makes your company unique.
- Which products or services are to be addressed in your core messages, i.e. how do you intend to win over customers?
- Are there longer-term business goals or investments that are relevant to your customers?

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As a result, the key messages for the current trade fair appearance should be available in writing on a maximum of half a DIN A4 page. Then you need to define the channels through which the messages are to be conveyed. The advertising and communication measures checklist at the end of the chapter offers a wide range of options.

### Tips: Define core messages

#### Focus on relevant key messages

- ▶ What are the strengths and weaknesses of your company on the market and in the products and services you offer?
- ▶ Is there anything that makes your business unique?
- ▶ What does the market look like at the moment? Are there new legal regulations, is there a significant need for investment due to modernisation, are there new market processing strategies and is there high price pressure?
- ▶ What are the medium-term goals of your company? Where is this journey taking us?
- ▶ What new and existing products and services are being used and should be used to attract customers?
- ▶ What current success stories can we share?

#### Sources:

- ▶ What information can marketing provide?
- ▶ Which marketing campaigns are currently being implemented?
- ▶ What other marketing campaigns should be implemented after the trade fair or during the course of the year?
- ▶ What are the key messages that the sales department makes use of?
- ▶ What is the current and medium-term sales strategy?

#### General guidelines

- ▶ Are there key corporate and brand messages that need to be reflected in the trade fair appearance? What internal guidelines must be observed?
- ▶ Does the trade fair communication concept have to be approved by management or marketing/sales?



## Three phases of communication

A communication concept should take into account the three main phases – before, during and after the trade fair.

### Before the trade fair

The pre-fair phase is about attracting the attention of the target group. Contact objectives are decisive here. It's about getting on the visitors' virtual shopping list. This is a real challenge nowadays, because schedules are jam-packed. Whether you're dealing with a manager or a sales representative, a simple save-the-date is not enough.

To enable you to speak to as many people as possible during the trade fair, it is important that you contact partners, customers and potential new customers before the start of the trade fair. It is usually difficult for guests to agree a specific time on a particular day of the trade fair, given the large number of activities available to visitors. However, if you agree beforehand that you want to speak at the trade fair in general, for example on a certain day, you are already creating a certain commitment. And if you agree a specific meeting time, all the better. In addition to making personal, written and telephone appointments, you can also use online specialist portals and, for example, relevant trade fair groups in networks such as LinkedIn or Xing to make appointments.

In order to generate new contacts, it is essential that you create an acquisition concept, review target customers, identify target persons and define appropriate measures.

When it comes to existing customers, the aim is to look after customers. It's about deepening and expanding the business relationship and making your customers feel that your company is a reliable and innovative partner.

In consultation with sales, your task is now to determine which

- existing customers from which segments are available for which products
- messages you want to convey to them
- products and/or services are showcased for regular customers
- benefits these have from the customer's point of view

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And also:

- what is the best way to reach this target group to encourage them to visit your stand?
- what measures can you use to communicate these messages?

### During the trade fair

The trade fair itself is essentially used for relationship management. At the trade fair stand, it is important to be a friendly host and skilfully build on the pre-trade fair communication. The trade fair stand is nothing more than a huge live advert, which involves a lot of emotion and a lot of opportunities to establish a relationship in a short space of time.

In face-to-face discussions, it is the task of the stand team to:

- create trust,
- arouse interest,
- present products and solutions,
- generate direct sales or
- agree meeting dates for a follow-up.

Special events at the stand, such as live demonstrations or test stations, can increase the number of visitors to the stand, including spontaneous visitors. Additional advertising impulses can be provided by means of further campaigns in the vicinity of the fair – for example with advertising posters in the train stations, or the hire of advertising spaces or special promotional campaigns at the exhibition venue.

### After the trade fair

Now it is important to remain credible and to continue to show genuine interest in the visitor. Now that you know the needs and wishes of the visitor, the next step is to meet them in a timely manner. In order to communicate your appreciation for the conversation at the trade fair, you can contact the person after the trade fair, for example, with a personalised thank-you letter and any relevant information about the topic. It's also about making yourself stand out from your competitors when it comes to communication. So try to think of something special for your top contacts. For example, you can send them a feel-good package with herbal tea and luxury snacks according to the motto: "Recover from the strenuous days of the trade fair and enjoy your information package in peace. We look forward to talking with you further at the agreed meeting time."



The main objective of this phase is for the sales team to systematically strengthen and deepen relationships through a clearly defined strategy for following up on contacts made at the trade show.

As you can see, these three phases cover different ways of contacting your target groups and other communication measures. Some of these measures will be targeted at all sections of the target group, for example:

- two to three months before the trade fair, a save-the-date email with information about the fair,
- banner ads in industry portals,
- entries in communication media provided by the trade fair organisers or
- competitions or advertising and promotion measures at the exhibition venue during the trade fair.

Other measures are only aimed at visitors who wish to attend:

- about one to two months before the trade fair, a personalised invitation, including vouchers to enter the trade fair,
- during the trade fair, the customer event or press conference and after the trade fair, a personalised thank-you note.

**Tip:** When planning your communication, you should keep in mind that at the trade fair itself, your brand will get significant direct exposure in a short space of time. This brand experience needs to be extended by continuing to attract more targeted attention from your audience by way of targeted communication, such as emails, social media posts, online posts, and face-to-face contact.

## Measures

### Trade fair invitation – not to be underestimated

The standard invitation letter with the information that you will be exhibiting at Product Z in Hall Y at trade fair X, with the invitation "Come and drop by our stand! We are looking forward to seeing you" will only prompt the biggest fans of your company to actually visit your stand. Therefore, focus on putting together an attractive concept.

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Your invitation should be

- creative,
- funny,
- memorable – a little tongue in cheek, or
- unusual.

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This even works in conservative industries and can provide the moment of attention needed to schedule a trip to visit your company at a trade show. Take a close look at the previous trade fair invitation concepts and compare them with those of your competitors. Since maximum creativity and consistency are important, it may make sense for you to call in a copywriter or specialist agency to help.

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In your invitation, clearly state why visiting your stand would be beneficial for the respective target group. This may mean that you need to draft different letters for different groups.

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**Tip:** Because a lot of things are done digitally these days, you can stand out from the pack in terms of communications with a personalised and clever postal invitation.

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### Tips: Visitor invitations

#### Invitation concept

Create a multi-level concept and use different communication channels, such as digital save-the-date information, an attractive postal invitation or a reminder postcard.

#### Address information

Check the different sources you can use, for example

- ▶ your company's own database
- ▶ the trade fair database or specialised address material from the trade fair organiser
- ▶ member lists of associations
- ▶ address material of specialist publishers
- ▶ network contact information
- ▶ press mailing list
- ▶ address brokers

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Pay particular attention to ensuring that the data is up to date, look out for duplicates. As we all know, databases have their pitfalls and you don't simply get the final, correct data list at the touch of a button. Therefore, include a sufficient time buffer in your planning.

When purchasing or using hired addresses, please check and observe the quality of the data and the legal data protection regulations and provider regulations.

### Invitation letter

The invitation should include:

- ▶ name of trade fair, place and date
- ▶ hall, stand number
- ▶ personal contact persons with contact details for making an appointment
- ▶ information on news, themes, products or services
- ▶ contact details (phone, email or website)
- ▶ option of requesting an entrance ticket voucher, alternatively, direct dispatch of entrance ticket vouchers
- ▶ note indicating the quickest way for visitors to find their way to your stand.

Optionally, you can include a visitor information flyer with a hall plan and hotel and city tips or information on interesting events, such as product demonstrations or specialist lectures.

### Face-to-face and telephone appointments

Schedule face-to-face or telephone follow-ups for key visitor target groups, for example, through key account managers directly or with the support of back office staff.

Alternatively, you can make appointments with external support from specialist call centres.

The responses must be structured and stored in a single location.

Check the returns regularly and keep all relevant departments informed about the status of actions on a regular basis. Keep motivating all those involved to take an active and consistent approach to making appointments.

**Tip:** Also think about your communication style: How do you encourage your target groups to visit the stand and talk? The style of all of your communications – from invitations to appointments to thank yous – should be appropriate for your audience.

Effective communication is supposed to evoke emotions or significantly alter the knowledge of the target group or contain a specific call to action, for example to make an appointment.

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## Checklist: Advertising and communication measures

Activities	Remark	Who?
1 Planning and placing advertising content before and after the trade fair.		
2 Selection and ordering of free (online) advertising materials from the trade fair organiser, for example signets, trade fair logos, trade fair banners, signature banners, exhibitor microsites for integration on your company's own homepage, maps, flyers showing how to get to the trade fair or your stand and visitor brochures.		
3 Order ticket vouchers from the trade fair organiser.		
4 Ask the trade fair organiser whether there are special visitor programmes, such as trade fair tours, networking events or hosted buyer programmes, in which providers and customers are brought together in a targeted manner.		
5 Ask the trade fair organiser which other presentation options are available in the supporting programme, such as lectures, special showcase areas, design competitions or innovation forums.		
6 Create a traditional and/or digital multi-stage invitation concept for the trade fair, for example with save-the-date information, target group-specific invitations, reminder measures, special invitations for events at the stand or outside.		
7 Planning of telephone acquisition and follow-up actions for appointments arranged with sales before the trade fair.		
8 Plan and design the trade fair communication concept at the stand and during the fair, for example live demonstrations at the stand, promotional campaigns at the exhibition venue, participation in supporting programme activities run by the organiser, events or customer evening at the stand, tours for specific visitor target groups, applicant events or other events at the stand, such as a graduate brunch.		

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Activities	Remark	Who?
Make catalogue and other online entries with the exhibition company. These are partly obligatory and usually come with a fee.		
Update the homepage with trade fair information or set up a special trade fair microsite (for example, hall plan, trade fair stand visualisation, appointment scheduling online and/or by phone, events, highlights and travel information).		
Include a note about the trade fair in the telephone hold message.		
Integrate digital advertising media into daily customer communication, for example via the email signature.		
Prepare a VIP programme for important customers, such as hotel booking, shuttle service, restaurant reservations.		
Create a press concept for the trade fair.		
Check advertising options at the exhibition centre/venue with the trade fair organiser and/or city marketing team.		
Planning, conception and implementation of information materials, such as traditional and/or digital brochures and catalogues.		
Planning, conception and implementation of online and social media measures before, during and after the trade fair.		
Planning of events at the stand and/or outside the exhibition venue.		
Planning, selection and procurement of give-aways for different visitor groups.		

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**Tip:** Trade fair organisers have many ways of supporting their exhibitors to promote their participation. Make the most of these offers!

## 8. The stand personnel

If trade fairs are irreplaceable in terms of face-to-face communication and personal contact with target groups, suppliers and employees, then special attention must be paid to stand crew preparations. The more motivated and qualified your stand personnel are, the greater the chances of good results and making new contacts. The targeted selection and intensive training of team members are just as important as presenting the company, products and services effectively.

### Personnel planning and preparation

The selection of suitable team members for the trade fair depends on their professional qualifications, but also on their personal characteristics. It is important that the stand crew know the company's goals and their target group and are trained in how to deal with them.

Depending on the size of the company and the international nature of the trade fair, the stand personnel may include:

- company representatives (Board of Management, Executive Board)
- stand management (responsible for the operation of the stand)
- technical personnel (demonstration specialists)
- field sales staff or commercial personnel (sales, delivery conditions)
- country representatives and subsidiaries (export discussions)
- media officers/corporate communications/social media managers
- team to man the information desks
- at hybrid trade fairs: personnel who are available to assist guests online

External personnel may include:

- catering team
- translation service providers
- staff to provide information/hosts
- service personnel, for example, for simple office activities, catering
- hygiene and cleaning
- video and sound specialists for AV technology, studio support, stage technology
- staff to help set up and dismantle the stand (if no stand builder has been commissioned)



**Tip:** Often the organisers will also offer the services of external personnel – who should receive training or instruction. Contact these people in advance to clarify any questions and expectations before the first day of the trade fair.

If the aim is to make as many customer contacts as possible, the most successful people are those who attract the attention of visitors.

In this case, it is important to have use open and inviting body language:

- always look at the aisle (or towards the camera) and try to make and maintain eye contact with the visitor
- do not block exhibits or important information about the company with your body
- leave enough space for visitors to enter the stand

After all, every visitor to a trade fair is a potential customer, so taking an active approach to addressing visitors is a must. However, experts estimate that 50 to 90% of the discussions begin with the conversation killer "Can I help you with anything?". After that cliché opener, the conversation often ends in seconds. Therefore, an open, sympathetic approach is the easiest way to break the ice: best of all, with a friendly greeting and a warm welcome to the trade fair stand.

#### Try this out:

"Hello, I see you are interested in our company and our latest innovation etc."

And then ask a question that is contextual, such as: "Do you work in this industry, too? What exactly are you interested in? Where do you use machines like this?"

#### Abilities that the stand personnel need when appearing at a hybrid trade fair:

Strong theoretical and practical expertise

If they do not have this: How do you make up for this?

Open-mindedness and genuine interest in visitors

Good social skills with a self-assured, confident manner

Rhetorical skills, particularly good linguistic skills, even in foreign languages

Intercultural skills for conversing with your own colleagues and clients from all over the world

Passion for travelling

Technical skills for working with various online platforms

Sustainable contact management, for example using matchmaking tools, lead management tools, various social media channels, etc.

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## The trade show outfit

The trade show outfit is a common topic of discussion at companies. However, the following should be noted: uniform clothing makes it easier for guests to identify the stand personnel. Specific clothing accessories may suffice, such as: name tag, ties/scarves or socks in the company's colours.

**Tip:** What are your company's colours? Where do these colours appear in presentations? Does the outfit match them?

In general, muted colours are less striking, and patterns tend to be a distraction. The same applies to changing substances, i.e. small patterns or colour changes in the fabric – this causes an irritating flickering effect in the camera image and distracts the viewer from what you want them to see.

## Active conversation management

The staff working at the stand should take note of what the guests are showing interest in. They can then wait for a convenient time to make initial contact. When welcoming prospective customers, the employee should introduce themselves and explain the exhibit in question. Well-known visitors should be greeted by name.

Tips on conversation strategy for sustainable customer interaction

1. Welcome – in other countries, you should at least be able to welcome visitors in their own language
2. Who is who – exchange of business cards and/or online matchmaking/lead management tools
3. Assessment of needs – apply techniques for asking questions
4. Short presentation – for example with the elevator pitch method\* or by story-telling
5. Follow-up – commit to a time or place and keep to it

At the end of the conversation, you should agree to get in touch again, for example, make an appointment or the send offers with specific details. When entering the lead in the lead management system, note the open questions, wishes etc. Otherwise, individual points can be quickly forgotten in the chaos of the trade fair.



\* What is the elevator pitch method?

We all know it – the elevator pitch method is used in advertising and on the TV show "Dragons' Den", not to mention in the case of start-ups: everyone makes a pitch. Pitching is part of everyday life at every company. The elevator pitch method is great for making your conversation particularly short and memorable, and also for arousing the interest of the other party at a trade fair, for example.

Here's a guide:

First, imagine that you are in an lift with someone you don't know, and they ask you, for example: What does your company do? or What's new at your stand?

Since you only have a few seconds, give a short answer, build excitement, address your customer/prospect's concerns, and give them something to follow up on. The follow-up may be, for example, having the customer come by your stand, visit your website etc.

## Motivation and training of stand personnel

At the exhibition, the company as a whole is assessed and compared with the competition. Every member of the exhibition team must be prepared to do their best before and during the exhibition as well as during the follow-up phase. Working at an exhibition is not simply an incentive, but rather a strenuous activity for which the team members should be thoroughly prepared. The more comprehensively the stand team is informed about the objectives of trade fair participation and the more clearly the tasks of each individual are defined, the more likely the stand staff are to meet the requirements set. Stand personnel who feel properly prepared and informed make a significant contribution to a smooth and successful exhibition.

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The stand crew needs to know the following details in order to showcase the company successfully:

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1. The visitor structure of the trade fair (for example, FKM visitor statistics) and the importance of the trade fair for the industry
2. The target group and objectives and which customers are expected to attend
3. The company's own product and service range, also in comparison with its competitors
4. How to deal with visiting contacts and how they are recorded in the long term
5. Organisational aspects, such as the exhibition venue, getting there and accommodation
6. The schedule and the rules at the stand (see ► Chapter 9 Stand operations)

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Some stand employees are often thrown in at the deep end and assigned stand duty. As a result, they may lack the practical experience in dealing with trade fair visitors – both in the traditional and digital format. The trade fair team should therefore be prepared for this task and trained for it.

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It is important to adapt to the particular trade fair situation and to practise the following:

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- holding a conversation, including techniques for asking questions and exchanging contact details
- delivering an elevator pitch or briefly introducing your company or your latest innovations at the trade fair
- making a lasting impression through tailored story-telling

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There are a number of special training seminars, publications and videos that can help you with trade fair preparations.

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It must be possible to answer the following questions after attending a trade fair training session:

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- how is the visitor's interest aroused, especially at hybrid fairs?
- how and when do you approach a trade fair visitor?
- how do you ask for and register the visitor's name and address (visitor registration)?
- how do you behave towards the general public at trade fairs?
- how do you deal with difficult situations professionally, for example in the case of complaints, questions about price policy, given the brief amount of time available etc.





You must always indicate your active willingness to engage with the visitors to the trade fair. Above all, avoid any behaviour that prevents interested parties from entering the stand (using a smartphone, in-depth conversations with other colleagues, messy or unclean exhibits etc.). Trade fairs are live events, and there is often no chance to make up for missed opportunities. It is often the case that a trade fair visitor only goes to a certain hall once during their visit and show interest in a particular stand for a brief period of time. If the staff do not show a willingness to talk, a potential lead has been lost.

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## 9. Stand operations

### Stand management

#### Tasks of the stand management

Stand sign-off inspection before the start of the event

Delegation of specific tasks to specific employees

Creation and monitoring of the work and attendance plan

Welcoming important visitors

Helping with customer conversations

Sharing important communications with the headquarters

Coordination of the performance review with trade fair benefit check

You can compare trade fairs with high-performance sports: both the company and the employees are giving it their all. But they also need motivators – often called the stand management. The stand management are usually the first people to arrive at the stand and open everything, and in the evening they are the ones who turn off the lights. Stand management are responsible for ensuring that the events at the stand run smoothly: both externally in relation to the visitors and internally in relation to the trade fair team and the company on site. Depending on the size of the exhibition stand, there may also be a division of tasks: one dedicated manager who is responsible for sales and one manager who is responsible for organisation at the trade fair.

Special attention is paid to having a well-prepared stand team. It is therefore recommended that the stand personnel be given a final briefing on the evening before the trade fair to discuss the code of conduct at the stand. This includes, for example:

- introducing the team, including any external personnel
- providing information about the trade fair/the competition
- providing information about the trade fair objectives/target groups
- providing information about activities and special events during the fair
- explaining exhibits, presentations, documents etc.
- explaining visitor recording/lead management
- providing instructions on customer care/hygiene policy
- providing notes for the press officers/social media managers
- issuing the schedule, assigning stand responsibilities and regulating break times
- discussing the code of conduct/dos & don'ts with regard to the team and visitors



## Code of conduct at the stand

In the attendance plan, you determine who is responsible for the individual tasks, for example for the presentation of the exhibits, addressing guests, the cleanliness of meeting rooms or seating groups during the day, for the hospitality or, at hybrid trade fairs, who looks after the online participants.

At the same time, you also define the break times as well as the time of the daily huddle – in the morning or evening – when the team is informed about the success of the trade fair and details for the next day (important activities at the stand etc.).

Weak points in the process can also be addressed and eliminated in a short space of time. A debriefing should also be scheduled for the end of the trade fair.

A well-organised stand and a well-managed trade fair team will ensure that:

- the stand is clean (hygienic) and tidy at all times of the day
- no bottlenecks arise in the supply of consumer goods (advertising materials, food and drink)
- all the technical equipment at the stand works correctly, such as the Wi-Fi, the transfer of lead data from the trade fair to head office, and the studio in the case of hybrid trade fairs
- the code of conduct at the stand and attendance times are observed
- the atmosphere at the stand is friendly, relaxed, helpful and professional
- the stand management know exactly where their employees are
- conversations with guests are recorded in writing and evaluated.

## Hospitality

Hospitality (food and drink) can also be organised for a small trade fair stand. If the hospitality is related to the company's place of origin, it will be remembered positively.

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## Visitor recording

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In order to do effective follow-up work and draw clear conclusions on the success of the trade fair or return on investment, it is essential that visitor contact be recorded.

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It can be recorded in different ways and solutions differ from company to company. These are the current methods for recording visitor contact:

3

- using a pre-printed paper form, to which the visitor's business card is attached and where further information is recorded, usually in multiple choice format
- using a scanner (the hardware is generally hired out by the organiser/ service provider)
- using a dedicated lead management solution, in which the business card or the contact details are scanned with a smartphone and any other data is then entered

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There are some service providers, apps etc. that can also be used for hybrid trade fairs. It is important here that any lead generation is compliant with data protection laws. You can read more about this here: <https://www.auma.de/de/medien/meldungen/keine-angst-vor-visitenkarten>

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Pre-printed forms reduce the amount of effort involved and allow the stand personnel to fill in details quickly. Only precise completion (easy to read/ understand) of the report forms/notes guarantees that enquiries can be dealt with promptly. The following is an example of a conversation note that can be used during a trade fair conversation:

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## Trade fair and market information

In addition to looking after the stand, the stand team can also conduct market research by conducting a visitor survey at the stand and at the exhibition centre/venue.

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Information about the products, the stand design and activities of competitors may provide valuable ideas. Tours of the trade fair serve to motivate and educate the stand team.

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## Notes on Discussion

### Trade Fair / Exhibition

#### 1. Address / Business card

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Company \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 Country \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fon \_\_\_\_\_  
 Fax \_\_\_\_\_  
 eMail \_\_\_\_\_

#### 2. Area of responsibility

- ☐ Business Management  
☐ Purchase / Acquisition  
☐ Manufacture / production  
☐ Sales / Marketing  
☐ Research / Development / Design  
☐ Financial Affairs  
☐ Administration / Organisation  
  
☐ Competitor  
☐ Press / Advertising

#### 3. branch of industry

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

#### 4. Economic sector

- ☐ Trade ☐ Importer  
☐ Industry ☐ Consultant  
☐ Distributor ☐ Education / science  
☐ Retailer ☐ Authority  
☐ Exporter ☐ Consumer

#### 5. Customer structure

- ☐ New customer  
☐ customer  
  
☐ Host country ☐ USA / Canada  
☐ Neighbouring countries ☐ Latin America  
☐ European Union ☐ Asia  
☐ Other European countries ☐ Australia / Oceania  
  
 Language of negotiations \_\_\_\_\_  
 Language of correspondence \_\_\_\_\_

#### 6. Remarks

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

#### 7. Topic of discussion

Product \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
  
 Trend  
☐ positive ☐ neutral ☐ negative  
 Complaint \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

#### 8. Result

handed over \_\_\_\_\_ to be send \_\_\_\_\_  
  
☐ Business card \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Prospect / leaflet \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Price list \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ Sample \_\_\_\_\_

#### 9. Day

Visit arranged \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date \_\_\_\_\_

#### Discussion leader

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Departement \_\_\_\_\_

#### 10. Visit on the event's day

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You can also evaluate the publications to be received at the trade fair:

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- online trade fair information system/catalogue
- brochures about special events
- presentations/key note speeches
- special issues of trade journals
- competitor brochures and advertising material
- analyses by the organiser

2

### Final work at the stand

3

Now that the trade fair is over, preparations for the next one can begin.

4

At the end of each trade fair day and immediately after the end of the trade fair, a debriefing and/or an anonymous survey should be conducted with the stand team. While the memories are still fresh, all the small details can be written down, recorded and evaluated with the next trade fair in mind.

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6

**Tip:** Do not start dismantling the stand until the event is officially over. This is a binding obligation when registering for the stand (see Registration). Timely organisation of the dismantling and transport processes helps to save time and avoid stress. The dismantling process is often strictly regulated by the organiser and carried out under great pressure of time.

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Make sure that the important exhibits are properly dismantled and remember to avoid unnecessary waste, for example by re-using materials and equipment.

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## 10. Follow-up and performance review

Targeted follow-up work after the trade fair is crucial for the success of the trade fair. It supports the achievement of the marketing and sales targets by means of appropriate measures. This trade fair may be over, but the next one is around the corner: what follow-up work is carried out when and by whom (sales, field sales service, marketing) must be defined and prepared before the trade fair. The basis for the follow-up and performance review is the systematic evaluation of the recorded trade fair contacts and summaries of conversations.

### Follow-up actions

Participation in the trade fair is often the beginning of an intensive business process, which in many industries extends over a longer period of time with different activities before a contract is concluded. After evaluating the summaries of conversations, it is necessary to divide the leads into different work steps:

- assigning a responsible person
- scheduling the activities
- sending the promised documents (offers, samples, information material)
- telephone appointments to schedule a visit by the field sales team
- visits by the field sales team
- processing the orders received at the trade fair

#### Trade fair follow-up

Thank you letters  
to important customers

Fast delivery of documents

Call routing in-house

Follow-up calls

Demand processing, field sales  
team, sales office, representatives,  
dealers

**Note:**  
**this all requires meaningful  
notes on conversation**

After initial contact, the ability and willingness of the entire company to provide the products and/or services must be demonstrated. Different target groups – such as existing customers, new customers, prospective customers and the media – also require different activities.

The reliability, speed, manner and style of handling the trade fair leads give visitors an impression of the reliability of future cooperation. First and foremost, prompt processing of enquiries made immediately after the trade fair is important, as otherwise the competition may respond more quickly

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- Invited customers and prospective customers who did not turn up, should
- receive information about new products and the latest developments that were showcased at the trade fair, and
  - be contacted afterwards, by phone or in writing.

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Journalists and opinion leaders who stopped by should receive:

- a thank you message for the visit and
- the final report on the trade fair with photos.

2

Journalists and opinion leaders who did not stop by should receive:

- the entire press kit, as well as
- the final report on the trade fair with photos.

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## Performance review

The performance review depends primarily on the type of trade fair and the associated goals.

5

The performance review of the company's activities is an essential part of modern corporate management. Trade fairs offer direct feedback from the target groups and direct market analysis findings like no other medium. It is therefore important to get as complete a picture as possible of the visitors to the stand, their aims and their interests – in terms of the goals and the type of trade fair. Another aspect is the financial review.

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The performance review includes the following aspects:

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- review of budget allocation
- control of participation costs
- evaluation of contracts concluded, contacts and information obtained
- evaluation of visitor recording
- comparison of the visitor structure at the stand
  - with the target groups
  - with previous trade fair participation
- evaluation of your own invitations
- assessment of the qualification of the stand personnel
- evaluation of response from the press

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The performance review serves as a basis for decision-making for the adaptation and optimisation of future trade fair participation. The results will be taken into account in future stand concepts, the selection and number of staff used, the invitations and the use of the trade fair budget.

Due to the high costs of trade fair participation, the budget is often the focus of the performance review. The cost-benefit comparison paints a highly accurate picture. In a cost-benefit comparison, the replacement costs of alternative marketing instruments or media are considered in addition to the costs of participating in the trade fair. The comparison is based on the trade fair targets actually achieved (quantitative and qualitative) and the associated costs. The comparable replacement costs are calculated on the basis of other measures and media that can be used to achieve the same objectives and compared with the actual costs of the trade fair. Due to the quality and complexity of the trade fair objectives and measures, the trade fair costs are in most cases lower than the replacement costs. Such an analysis is aimed at helping the company decide whether to participate in the trade fair or not.

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**AUMA Toolbox MNC TradeFairBenefitCheck**

Start TradeFairBenefitCheck 1a. 1b. 2. 3. MNC

\* How to use

\* Set targets – calculate benefits

Quantitative / operative trade fair targets	Set targets	Benefit in €
<b>Contact targets</b> 3 / 5		36000
Care of regular customers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	23500
Acquiring new customers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	10500
Acquiring new cooperation partners	<input type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	0
Acquiring new employees	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	2000
VTP service (politics, business)	<input type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	0
<b>Communication / information targets</b> 3 / 5		34900
Increase awareness: company / products / services	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	26000
Improve the image of the company or individual brands	<input type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	0
Establishment and cultivation of relations with the media	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	5900
Market research: customer behaviour, trends, product acceptance etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	0
Qualification of sales staff	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	3000
<b>Presentation targets</b> 1 / 1		10000
Presentation of products / services / technical processes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	10000
<b>Sales and distribution targets</b> 1 / 4		3000
Contracts (sales) concluded during and after the trade fair	<input type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	0
Implementation of new business terms	<input type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	0
Opening up of new markets	<input type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	0
Development of new sales channels	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> calculate benefit	3000
<b>1a. Benefit of the trade fair participation: Quantitative / operative targets</b>		<b>= 83900</b>

## The AUMA trade fair benefit check

The basic idea is that exhibiting companies should first decide on the goals they want to achieve and to what extent and how they can measure the achievement of goals. The value of quantitative targets is determined by identifying the costs that would be incurred by using alternative marketing tools. For example, the very expensive field sales service would have to be used more extensively if a company wanted to meet with a certain number of new customers in contrast to participating in the trade fair. The value of the bene-



AUMA Toolbox: MNC TradeFairBenefitCheck

Start TradeFairBenefitCheck 1a. 1b. 2. 3. MNC

How to use

Evaluate trade fairs

Qualitative / strategic trade fair targets and effects	Relevance	Share of trade fair success
	measured against total costs from step 2.	
	High None in percent	in €
Presence at sector get-together	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 2%	853
Positioning in comparison with competition (benchmarking)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 4%	1706
Quality of contacts through direct customer communication	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0%	0
Networking with customers / competitors	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 2%	853
Effectiveness of visitor decisions at trade fairs	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 2%	853
Contribution to sector marketing	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 2%	853
Control of internal projects through fixed dates of trade fairs	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 3%	1280
Creation of "we-feeling" among employees (motivation)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 3%	1280
Diversity of achievable targets (multi-functionality)	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 2%	853
Other targets:	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 0%	0

1b. Benefit of the trade fair participation: qualitative / strategic targets 20 % = 8530 €

Note: the sum may not add up to 100%.

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fits calculated in this way for the individual trade fair targets are added to the quantitative value of the benefit of participating in the trade fair.

In addition, the company assesses the value of achieving qualitative trade show goals, such as participation in the trade show as a key industry event. The value of such targets is expressed as a percentage of total expenses.

**AUMA Toolbox: MNC TradeFairBenefitCheck**

Toolbox: **de en fr es** MNC TradeFairBenefitCheck Help Conditions of use | data protection Imprint www.auma.de

Messe fit  
Personal Trade Fair plan  
**MNC**  
TradeFairBenefitCheck  
MNC Trainer

**Projects**  
Project 1  
Title: International Trade Fair  
Place: Germany  
Date: 2. - 6.3.2022  
visitors: 70000  
Stand size: 48  
Updated: 18.3.2021, 13:33  
Project 2  
Power User  
Not logged in  
sign up  
sign in

**Start TradeFairBenefitCheck** 1a. 1b. **2.** 3. **MNC**

How to use

**Determine costs**

Cost overview  
Stand size in m<sup>2</sup>: 48

Part sums in €

Cost Category	Determine costs	Value (€)
Basic costs	Determine costs	9216
Costs of stand construction/furnishing and design as well as depreciations	Determine costs	14400
Costs for stand service and communication	Determine costs	4676
Costs for transport, handling and waste disposal	Determine costs	1440
Personnel and travel costs	Determine costs	11040
Other costs	Determine costs	1878
<b>Total costs</b>		
<b>2. Total costs of the trade fair participation</b>		<b>= 42650 €</b>

The cost of participation is then calculated as part of the assessment, taking into account the intended benefit to be achieved. These costs are then compared with the total value of the benefit from quantitative and qualitative targets.

With the trade fair benefit check, the costs and benefits of both planned and completed trade fair appearances can be calculated with relatively little effort. Accordingly, this tool is aimed specifically at small and medium-sized enterprises. The trade fair benefit check is intended to help examine the entire range of possible trade fair objectives and formulate concrete targets as a prerequisite for effective performance review.

The AUMA trade fair benefit check is available to download for free at [► auma.de](https://www.auma.de).



AUMA Toolbox: MNC TradeFairBenefitCheck

Start TradeFairBenefitCheck 1a. 1b. 2. 3. MNC

**Result**

<b>1a.</b>	Benefit of trade fair participation: quantitative / operative	+ 83900
<b>1b.</b>	Benefit of trade fair participation: qualitative / strategic	+ 8530
<b>2.</b>	Total costs of trade fair participation	- 42650
<b>3.</b>	Cost-benefit comparison of trade fair participation	= <b>49780</b>

**Conclusion**  
The benefit-cost comparison is positive:  
The trade fair pays off for you.

Detailed results  
Compare projects

Toolbox de en fr es MNC TradeFairBenefitCheck Help Conditions of use | data protection Imprint www.auma.de

Messe fit  
Personal Trade Fair plan  
MNC  
TradeFairBenefitCheck  
MNC Trainer

Projects  
Project 1

Title	International Trade Fair
Place	Germany
Date	2. - 6.3.2022
visitors	70000
Stand size	48
Updated	18.3.2021, 13:33

Project 2  
☒ Power User

Not logged in  
? sign up  
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## CHECKLIST: Workflow planning for trade fair participation

### Months until the start of the trade fair

#### 1. Decision-making phase



- ▶ **Compilation of the company data**
  - ▶ information on the company philosophy, history, tradition..... ☐
  - ▶ information on corporate identity..... ☐
  - ▶ information on position on the market ..... ☐
  - ▶ information on developments and innovations ..... ☐
  - ▶ corporate, marketing and sales goals ..... ☐
- ▶ **Selection of the trade fair** ..... ☐
  - ▶ comparison of different trade fairs on the market  
Obtaining information about AUMA, associations, chambers, etc. .... ☐
  - ▶ possibly visit the trade fairs for orientation ..... ☐
  - ▶ selection of the right trade fair according to visitor structure and nomenclature..... ☐
- ▶ **Concept design and registration** ..... ☐
- ▶ **Development of the rough concept (for determining the stand size)** ..... ☐
  - ▶ determination of the trade fair objectives ..... ☐
  - ▶ planning of the main themes and exhibits ..... ☐
  - ▶ planning of the space required for visitor services ..... ☐
- ▶ **Coordination of general planning at the company**..... ☐
- ▶ **Decision to take part in the trade fair** ..... ☐
- ▶ **Determination of responsibilities / trade fair team** ..... ☐
- ▶ **Registration of participation at the trade fair with the organiser** (please be sure to observe the registration deadline for the trade fair) ..... ☐
  - ▶ request and fill in the registration documents ..... ☐
  - ▶ define stand size and type..... ☐



## CHECKLIST: Workflow planning for trade fair participation

### 2. Planning phase



- ▶ Scheduling and workflow control planning ..... ☐
- ▶ Budget planning/cost calculation ..... ☐
- ▶ Personnel deployment planning ..... ☐
  - ▶ selection of stand personnel ..... ☐
  - ▶ booking of hotel rooms ..... ☐
  - ▶ travel planning..... ☐

### 3. Organisation phase



- ▶ Registration of the stand services with the organiser (according to the schedule) ..... ☐
  - ▶ electricity, water, compressed air, IT ..... ☐
  - ▶ trade fair information systems, catalogue entry ..... ☐
- ▶ Selection, briefing and commissioning of service providers. ☐
  - ▶ stand construction, model construction, graphics, transport, catering, give-aways, etc. .... ☐
- ▶ Exhibits ..... ☐
  - ▶ determination and production of exhibits and models .... ☐
- ▶ Transport planning ..... ☐
  - ▶ commissioning of carrier services..... ☐
  - ▶ ordering of lifting equipment on site..... ☐
- ▶ Design and printing of the information and brochure material ..... ☐
- ▶ Layout and production of the stand graphics ..... ☐
- ▶ Announcement of trade fair participation and invitations .. ☐
  - ▶ announcement in all relevant media..... ☐
  - ▶ announcement on your own website ..... ☐
  - ▶ personalised invitations ..... ☐
  - ▶ public relations work ..... ☐

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## CHECKLIST: Workflow planning for trade fair participation



- ▶ **Travel planning** ..... ☐
  - ▶ air/rail ticket orders ..... ☐
  - ▶ confirmation of hotel rooms..... ☐
- ▶ **Stand personnel**
  - ▶ planning of the kick-off event for the stand personnel ..... ☐
  - ▶ equipment of the stand personnel (clothing, name tags)..... ☐
- ▶ **Ordering of stand catering**..... ☐
- ▶ **Preparation of the documents for recording any conversations** ..... ☐

### 4. Implementation phase



- ▶ **Supervision of set-up work** ..... ☐
- ▶ **Supervision of deliveries**..... ☐
- ▶ **Customs clearances (import), where applicable**..... ☐
- ▶ **Sign-off inspection of all services by the project management** ..... ☐
- ▶ **Control of stand-by services during the trade fair** ..... ☐
- ▶ **Storage of empty containers** ..... ☐
- ▶ **Handover of the stand to the stand management**..... ☐





## CHECKLIST: Workflow planning for trade fair participation



- ▶ Customer and VIP care ..... ☐
- ▶ Hospitality for guests ..... ☐
- ▶ Documentation of the discussions ..... ☐
- ▶ Observation of the competition ..... ☐
- ▶ Documentation of the stand (photos, films) ..... ☐



- ▶ Removal/delivery of empty containers..... ☐
- ▶ Supervision of dismantling work..... ☐
- ▶ Customs clearances (export), where applicable ..... ☐
- ▶ Return transport ..... ☐

### 5. Follow-up phase



- ▶ Follow-up with trade fair leads ..... ☐
- ▶ Billing and cost control ..... ☐
- ▶ Performance review ..... ☐
  - ▶ goal achievement ..... ☐
- ▶ Debriefing..... ☐
- ▶ Final report and documentation of the event ..... ☐
- ▶ Decision to participate in the next trade fair..... ☐

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## Authors

For more than 20 years, AUMA has been providing exhibiting companies with tips on trade fair participation by means of this brochure, which is updated regularly.

We would like to thank Karla Juegel, Spomenka Kolar-Zovko, Thorsten Kollmeier and Lars Lockemann for their support in preparing this updated version.

**Karla Juegel** is a trade fair expert and consultant with 40 years of experience in the international trade fair industry and owner of the Munich-based Messe|Marketing agency. As a consultant, coach and trainer, she combines operational trade fair expertise with strategic marketing and knows all facets of the trade fair industry. She advises exhibitors and organisers worldwide. She gained her international experience at Mercedes and Airbus, where she was responsible for global trade fair appearances and as a concept design expert at renowned agencies and in trade fair stand construction. She is an active member of the associations of the international trade fair industry, ambassador of the MICE industry of Qingdao China, appointed expert of the federal government and has numerous teaching assignments at universities in Germany and abroad (China, Germany, India, Italy).

Her agency specialises in providing trade fair advice and training and offers a wide range of customised preparation services to exhibitors at domestic and foreign trade fairs.

Contact: [kj@karla-juegel.com](mailto:kj@karla-juegel.com) / +49 89 1409308

**Spomenka Kolar-Zovko** is the owner of Escolar Academy. She is one of the most successful trade fair trainers in the German-speaking world, teaching more than 2,000 students each year. As early as 1989, she worked on a trade fair stand as Key Account Manager at CeBIT. Ms Kolar-Zovko gained leadership skills and her first experience with digitalisation, among other things, from 1991 to 1996 as sales manager for a listed software company.

Since 1997, Ms Kolar-Zovko has been an independent coach and trainer, focussing on empowering people and companies in the areas of brand performance, sales techniques and intercultural skills. She is continuously expanding her close partnerships with German-speaking trade fair organisers and also founded the Academy Escolar in Wuhan, China and Zagreb, Croatia in 2017. Ms Kolar-Zovko is co-initiator of the MeetExpoClub, by exhibitors for exhibitors.

Contact: [info@escolar.de](mailto:info@escolar.de) / +49 6151 1542486



**Thorsten Kollmeier** is the restless "Silverliner" with more than 35 years of experience in the trade fair business. Right at the beginning of his work in trade fair stand construction, as a student of product design, he became aware of the huge consumption of resources. After a few days at the trade fair, the aisles and various containers were filled with piles of rubbish. Social aspects such as working hours have become increasingly irrelevant over the years.

His extensive management experience and associated consulting skills result from several decades of business, including self-employed work. He successfully conveys this knowledge in training formats and lectures at congresses and trade fairs. Sustainability, CSR and digitalisation are key areas of focus in the context of three-dimensional brand communication, which are also reflected in his blogs, workshops and as a co-author.

Contact: Thorsten.Kollmeier@wum.de / +49 173 953 88 68

**Lars Lockemann** is the founder of fairconcept in Munich and specialises in B2B trade fair participation for medium-sized industrial companies. Since 2000, he has provided strategic and operational support in trade fair projects for more than 80 customers. His key areas of focus are concept design and strategy, as well as the generation of leads at trade fairs.

Since 2020, he has been working with his customers to find answers to questions regarding the digitalisation of live communication as an alternative and addition to trade fair participation. Since then, he firmly believes that combining digital and analogue formats can lead to an entirely new level of quality in B2B communication.

Contact: lars.lockemann@fairconcept.de / +49 89 523 00 686

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