

European Pess Conference

imm cologne 2018

6 September 2017, 11.00 a.m., The Hague, Zuidenstrandtheater

Comments by Gerald Böse, President and Chief Executive Officer of Koelnmesse on the occasion of the European press conference on 6 September 2017 in The Hague on the occasion of imm cologne 2018



imm cologne
15.01.-21.01.2018
www.imm-cologne.com

Dear Sir/Madam,

imm cologne can once again present good figures in 2018, as the exhibition space already booked has exceeded all of our expectations. Compared with the same period of the previous year (2016), we have recorded double-digit growth overall, and that with respect to numbers of exhibitors and the amount of area reserved.

This positive development is driven by a double-digit percentage increase in registrations from abroad. In concrete terms this means, in addition to the many returning exhibitors from previous years, a marked increase in interest from exhibitors from eastern and south-eastern Europe has been observed, especially from Poland, Greece and Turkey. Furniture companies from southern Europe also value the market in Germany - a double-digit increase in exhibitors from Italy, Spain and Portugal has likewise been reported. In addition to this, we were also able to improve our numbers in terms of providers from the USA. In total, we expect over 1,200 exhibitors, over 70% of them from abroad.

With Pure Architects, the further development of LivingInteriors, we are staging various product worlds for installation on the floor, the walls and on the ceiling in many facets. In this way we supplement our core assortment of furniture with three sub-sections and create an innovatively staged spatial experience for architects, designers, planners, interior decorators and end consumers. The two themes of bathrooms and smart homes will be major focal points in this segment in 2018. Another area of focus will be on light. A lamp today is much more than just a source of light. Correctly staged and equipped with the right technology, light can create spaces and atmosphere. Enough reason to grant the theme adequate space. From decorative lamps to lighting systems through to digital lighting control, visitors to the trade fair will experience the subject of light in all its facets. With Lucie Koldova, who I would also like to very warmly welcome, we have been able to win a wonderful light designer for our "Das Haus" project. By dividing lighting into decorative light in the Pure Editions section and technical lighting in the new Pure Architects hall concept, we are taking another logical step in developing as a holistic interiors show.

Around 8 percent of furniture is today sold via online platforms or traders. Consumers also orient themselves both online and offline when searching for new interiors ideas. The question we need to ask ourselves as a trade fair company is what this means for imm cologne?

Page
2/4

The increasing importance of online platforms and the digitality of society also means for us, as a trade fair company, and for the imm cologne as an established brand with a leadership function, that we need to adapt our concepts accordingly. The trade fair business has long since become much more than simply a matter of selling our exhibitors as much space as possible. It is no longer enough to guide more visitors to the trade fair stands every year. Decisive are the business contacts that generate business, and we ultimately have to sell much more emotion in order to generate a positive mood in the industry. However, what does this mean for the future of a trade fair like imm cologne? Important for us is a consistent brand experience. It is the visitor experience that increasingly defines how a brand is perceived, and this is for us one of the most decisive features differentiating us from our competitors. This brand experience of imm cologne will in future also increasingly involve digital features.

Our touch points are currently the trade fair homepages and micro-sites, our social media channels and blogs, business networks like ambista, matchmaking for visitor registration, e-ticketing through the Fair Mate app or digital lead tracking. In the process we rely on digital lead tracking to trace who a visitor visits at the event. Digital route guidance and digital visitor information help us understand what is important to our visitors. With lead tracking and close cooperation with our exhibitors, we can already estimate in advance of the next trade fair whether a visitor will also participate in the following imm cologne. The "Customer Journey", whether exhibitor, business customer or end consumer, thus already begins far in advance of the trade fair. The actual visit then concludes the first part of this journey and opens up additional possibilities for the second part following the trade fair. In short: with the Customer Journey we get to know our visitors better. Digitalisation thus offers us not only additional communications options as a trade fair organiser. It also provides us with the possibility for service-oriented action and to support exhibitors with sales-promoting measures.

How do we want to achieve this? The previously named services become possible when the interest profile of a visitor is focused prior to the event through the answering of structural questions. Digitalisation is a big chance for us to generate sustainable added value together with our customers. As part of the entire value creation chain, we, as a trade fair organiser and industry partner, can create the prerequisites and decisively help shape the industrial infrastructure through the use of intelligent systems. What does that mean for the future? As soon as visitors enter the fair grounds, their mobile devices connect with our trade fair server. They receive a personalised welcome with a direct link to the events, press events, lecture forums and new products of most importance to them. Thanks to a digital hall map, they will also find out where their top ten exhibitors can be found.

iBeacons draw their attention to new products. Everything personalised, everything tailored to them. In return, exhibitors receive information about your visit, your participation in potential press events, and your wishes for product information, and can quickly offer you visit appointments.

Page
3/4

With reference to the offering of imm cologne 2018, I would like to point out three examples. The first example is our digital platform "ambista - The interior design network". With "ambista" we have established a content-driven business network for the global interiors industry. "ambista" is a pure B2B platform that provides the entire industry with the possibility to establish and maintain business contacts throughout the year. More than 3,000 participants and more than 10,000 products are now part of the network. With ambista we offer companies the possibility to present themselves with their own profile and to introduce their products and services. A search engine makes "finding" other members, themes and companies easy. Industry-specific content complements the profiles of the companies and should inform, inspire and promote the exchange of ideas.

With Smart Home, which we will carry out for the third time next year, we focus on an absolutely future-oriented topic. While we are today still all fascinated by the technical possibilities provided to us by "smart solutions", in future the focus will be on themes like resource conservation or the chances offered by smart living in an aging society.

Or take our new "smart" format TOUCH by IMM. As a young, additional trade fair format that symbolises the digital connection of information and purchasing, TOUCH should address both trade visitors and end customers, and at the same time open up new digital sales channels. With this we herald the change from conventional touching of the furniture into the touching of a screen. TOUCH stands for the digital transformation of information up to the purchase.

We are accordingly pleased to be able to welcome OTTO GmbH & Co KG as an exhibitor at imm cologne 2018 in keeping with the motto "get in touch". With its Internet presence OTTO.de, it is one of the largest companies in online furniture commerce.

As a third example I would like to talk about influencer marketing at the trade fair. Platforms like facebook and YouTube thus offer considerably more influencers and far more possibilities than the classic channels. Every eleventh German is in the meantime considered an influencer, and influences the opinion makers in the social media channels with his contributions. According to studies, most consumers have more confidence in the online evaluations of other people than in the advertising messages of companies. This is where influencer marketing starts. Bloggers and YouTubers enjoy credibility with consumers. They are therefore well-suited to mediate new products and services. Thus, with Sally from "Sallys Welt" we had an absolute expert at LivingKitchen. With more than 990,000 subscribers and more than 190 million views, the young teacher inspires her viewers. We will considerably expand such cooperation in the coming years. In this way we offer our exhibitors new chances in the modern business channels.

Ladies and gentlemen, a strongly growing share of our trade fair visitors already comes from the so-called "Generation Y". Especially on visitor days, we see many young, design-oriented people searching at imm cologne for inspiration, for themselves, for their homes and for their followers. The daily use of mobile communication and social networks has long become self-explanatory, both in their private and career environments, for these so-called "digital natives". A differentiation between online and offline is no longer made. They post, tweet, like and share with a few clicks and are looking for a trade fair experience that supports them in their media consumption behaviour. And that's what we want to provide in future as Koelnmesse. What used to be the mail order catalogue is for "Generation Y", which has grown up with the Internet, their Instagram account, their facebook profile, their own lifestyle blog, their app. Their account is their photo album, full of wishes and inspirations, which are enthusiastically carried out into the world and shared. It will thus be important in future to win these visitors for our event! That is our central goal leading up to 2019.

Status: September 2017
Initials: 2912-Maj