

THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR EXPERIENCING PRODUCTS LIVE AND BEING ABLE TO SEE AND TOUCH THEM

Why attending exhibitions is important?



GR - THE LEADING CONVENTION CENTRE IN SLOVENIA, WHERE PERSONAL CONTACT IS THE HIGHEST PRIORITY

Interview with Iztok Bricl, MSc, Director, GR - Ljubljana Exhibition and Convention Centre

INTERVIEW BY **NINA PRAPROTNIK**



Photo: Dragan Arrigler

PROFESSIONAL:

Q: What is the philosophy and main advantages of the Ljubljana Exhibition and Convention Centre?

Our slogan, *'Everything is possible'*, communicates our attitude toward our clients: very open, flexible and proactive. Our teams accompany the customer from initial contact to realization. Personal contact is our highest priority. We collaborate with a network of outsourcing partners and together, we take care of everything: the decoration of halls, the supporting program, catering, hotel accommodation, transport, etc. We can provide turnkey events tailored specifically to client expectations.

Our responsive, quick and efficient approach is also possible due to our multifunctional halls which are adaptable according to the extent and purpose of an event and can be totally changed in a relatively short time. For example, the reception hall with the registration desk can be quickly converted for the catering. In addition to business conference halls, we can offer congress

organizers a special space for larger exhibitions and vice versa. For fairs, we offer not only halls for exhibition spaces but also spaces for workshops, consulting, lectures, etc. accompanying the program.

Our philosophy has been enhanced with the motivational slogan *"365 days of events"*, which has been mirrored in practice at various events, from international congresses, business conferences, educational seminars and receptions to cultural and social events, as well as established international fairs.

The advantages of our convention centre are, as already mentioned, the multi-purpose halls with predominantly natural light; our position in the very centre of Ljubljana, an easily accessible location only a few-minutes' walk to the majority of the larger hotels as well as to the main bus and train stations. We have our own parking and in close proximity there are parking lots with approximately 3,000 parking spaces.

Q: How does GR rank domestically and internationally?

We are the leading convention centre in Slovenia; GR events are visited by 400,000 people per year. In the international context, we are recognized as a contemporary, mid-sized convention centre with a tradition of more than 60-years. The unique location, in charming green surroundings, is an example of modern functional architecture and the building is also a cultural monument. As a result of past investment and several refurbishments, GR is a fresh and tidy venue, giving the impression of a well maintained centre in line with the highest international standards.

This autumn we are hosting eight important international congresses:

- 23 September: Erasmus+ Successes and Challenges
- 25 - 28 September: EUROGEO 2016: 6th European Geosynthetics Congress

- 29 September - 2 October: FIMS 2016: 34th World Congress of Sports Medicine
- 5 - 6 October: 48th International Danube Neurology Symposium
- 6 - 8 October: NMDPD 2016: 11th International Congress on Non-Motor Dysfunctions in Parkinson's Disease and Related Disorders
- 4 - 5 November: Translating for the Directorate-General for Translation of the European Commission
- 22 - 23 November: 7th European Alcohol Policy Conference
- 28 - 30 November: 9th Conference of the parties to the Convention on the Transboundary Effects of Industrial Accidents

Another significant advantage of GR – Ljubljana Exhibition and Convention Centre, is that it has become more and more recognizable as the host of global interactive exhibitions in the region: Bodies Revealed, Genius – Da Vinci, The Brain – the Inside Story, and 1001 Inventions. Over a few months these exhibitions attracted from 10,000 - 70,000 visitors.

Each year we host up to 20 fairs; the most recognizable are those organized by GR -Ljubljana Exhibition and Convention Centre, many of which have a tradition of more than half-century and are internationally recognized in the region. Why are fairs still so attractive for exhibitors and visitors alike? They certainly enable indispensable personal contact with producers and offer an overview of the competition. We are modernizing the existing fairs that we organize with new content and the latest trends. Furthermore, we are developing a supporting program which provides added value for visitors in terms of free professional consultations, workshops, training, etc. As organizers, we encourage innovation, creativity and orientation towards sustainability through special awards which enable additional promotion for the winners.

Main fairs:

- For 26 years, the **International Natour Alpe-Adria Fair**, which specializes in green, active tourism, combined with the boutique business exchange, Natour.
- GR is a co-founder of **Conventa**, the largest trade show for convention tourism in SE Europe. Every January, the most important providers of convention services from Slovenia and abroad meet at GR.
- **International Home Fair**, the largest specialist international construction fair in Slovenia and the neighbouring regions, and the largest fair in terms of exhibition area and number of exhibitors and visitors.
- **Vino Ljubljana** which includes an International Wine Competition. One of the oldest competitions in the world and combined with the **International Wine Fair** in the autumn, presents wine producers and growers, wine consortiums, distributors and wineries from Slovenia and abroad, with

wine tasting for participants.

- **Ambient Ljubljana**, a furniture fair which remains the top furnishing and furniture fair, focused on encouraging special achievements of designers.
- This year's **Ambient Ljubljana – Furniture Fair** will be accompanied under the slogan 'Everything for your home' by the **Home Plus Fair** with the following programme: civil engineering in building joinery, heating and cooling technology, prefabricated houses, security and landscape architecture. **Ambient Ljubljana** is the furnishing and furniture fair, focused on and encouraging the special achievements of designers. Top Ideas, the presentation of young, less known designers and architects, remains the highlight of the **Ambient Ljubljana** fair. The accompanying program consists of free individual architectural and expert consultancy for visitors on building, renovation, efficient energy use and renewable sources of energy. Two fairs which visitors will be able to attend with

a single ticket from 9 – 13 November.

- **Natural health fair** presenting topics focused on a healthy lifestyle, attracting numerous visitors interested in ecological, sustainable, healthy and alternative products and services.
- **Fair of Wishes Come True**, a New Year fair that traditionally presents the work of craftsmen and entrepreneurs and which will, this year, be accompanied by **Lego Planet**, a popular exhibition of Lego creations with workshops and competitions for children.

Q: What do you think the future holds for trade shows/fairs? Where do you see the potential for GR?

The potential of fair activity is shown in the development of a national economy and successful international connections. We see the potential primarily in innovation, such as the Forum of Innovations for the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia national awards, the annual Days of Nanotechnology that we host



Marjan Mačkošek, President, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia (CCIS), Iztok Bricl, MSc Director, GR – Ljubljana Exhibition and Convention Centre, Dr Miro Cerar, Prime Minister of the Republic of Slovenia (Photo: Archive GR)

every year to bring science and other areas of knowledge such as medicine, biology, and energetics. Together with the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, we organized the 5th Summit of Small Business in order to shed light on the most burning issues of small businesses and to present urgent improvements. It is with optimism that we monitor the latest trends in the furniture industry and also the recent upward trend in the car industry from the growing purchasing power.

Last August, two weeks prior to the world premiere at the Auto Salon in Frankfurt, the representatives of Audi in Slovenia brought to GR the new Audi A4 limousine and caravan. The star of the evening was Emanuele Pirro, Audi ambassador and ex-Formula 1 driver for Audi and a five time winner of the 24-hours of Le Mans.

In the middle of October, the Trade for Automotive Parts fair will be held once again. Last year, the fair attracted more than 3,000 visitors and presented 65 domestic and foreign auto-part manufacturers and partners of the trade organizers - GMT Group from Murska Sobota. The highlight of the event was the presentation of the replica of the vehicle attempting to break the 1997 world speed record (1228km/h) in South Africa in spring 2017.

We will present sustainable mobility, that is electric vehicles, at Nature-Health Fair. The

Energetics Solution Centre, with its sustainable mobility section, enables visitors a test drive to get acquainted with the most contemporary mobile technologies which do not pollute the environment with emissions and noise.

Finally, we proudly announce the biggest car industry fair in Slovenia: after almost 20 years, the Auto Salon is coming back to GR in Ljubljana!

Q: Many exhibitors are currently checking the effectiveness of their trade fair participation. Are companies rational enough in this respect?

The effect of fair presentation primarily depends on the company preparation, on its pre- and post-fair activities. It is not enough to rent an exhibition space. How to attract the target groups to the fair, which activities to develop for their fair presentation, how to be different, what to use to attract attention, how to use the advantages from their presence – these are only a few challenges for successful participation, all with a common denominator: the visitor/potential buyer is king.

Q: Do real fairs still have the same significance with the existence of virtual platforms?

We live in times of turbulent change in the development of technologies and communication.

Digitalization brings, amongst others things, virtual platforms which need to be taken into account. They can substantially clarify a fair organizers' picture of what can be done in a space. Virtual platforms can significantly upgrade exhibitor presentations. Personal contact, however, remains the core of one's presence at a fair.

Q: What trends can be seen in the development of trade fairs in general?

Fairs are more and more specialized, complemented by a strong consulting interactive segment, focused on the business public - an exhibition is accompanied by professional consultation at a conference; contemporary digital channels are extensively included for communication with the public.

Q: What is the next project that GR is looking forward to?

At the moment, the biggest challenge is the **The 24th Auto Salon Slovenia** which we are preparing together with the personal motor vehicles section of the Slovenian Chamber of Commerce and scheduled from 27 March to 2 April 2017. For the last two years, the sales of cars in Slovenia have been on the increase, which is also excellent for the Slovenian economy. The organizers agree that people are eager to see new cars and that we need to make an interesting presenta-



International Home Fair (Photo: Archive GR)



tion, to show the novelties here in Ljubljana immediately after the Geneva show.

We decided in favour of the 24th Auto Salon Slovenia at GR due to an excellent experience in Zagreb where, last spring, the show attracted 130,000 visitors. The Chamber agreed that next year the event would take place at GR in Ljubljana where it will be available to the widest circle of people. They also chose GR due to our offer, the price per square meter and a favourable ticket price. The 4th Auto Salon Slovenia will immediately follow the Home Fair, which means that we will have at our disposal additional exhibition surfaces in prefabricated halls.

We plan to present the latest trends in the car industry on 15,000m² of exhibition surfaces and we expect that the parade of passenger cars will attract 100,000 visitors.

Q: What are the advantages of Slovenia as a location for trade shows?

Slovenia has a developed business environment; within the region, it has an important connective role in the flow of ideas and people. Slovenia is a safe country with good infrastructure, competitive prices, known and appreciated for its openness and hospitality. This is certainly confirmed from our experience. The majority of our references are related to our teams – their dedication, motivation and engagement.

Q: Are the Slovenian and Ljubljana tourist organisations fulfilling their role in promoting trade fairs?

Both organizations are active at the tourism fair Natour Alpe-Adria as exhibitors and co-organizers of the accompanying professional program attended by international experts and representatives from the World Federation of Travel Journalists and Writers (FIJET) from the region. They regularly announce our activities in their communications. Cooperation is always useful and enables the exchange of experience, information and knowledge, and better mutual understanding. Networking continually brings new business opportunities, so we are always open to the development of broader collaboration; we believe that together we are more recognizable and popular.

MORE PERSONAL:

Q: How would you describe your job?

My work is dynamic, branching into many different areas and therefore interdisciplinary. It is the result of networking and good collaboration with the local community - the municipality of Ljubljana - as well as at the national level. Monitoring the latest trends in the economy and good connections with various associations and chambers, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, the Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia, and the Chamber of Commerce of Slovenia, are of utmost impor-

tance. Networking at the international level is crucial, too, especially within the CEFA (Central and South-Eastern European Fair Alliance) and UFI (Global Association of the Exhibition Industry), where experiences and ideas are exchanged.

SHORT QUESTIONS:

Q: What are the best moments you remember from your work?

The best moments are when the planned route is confirmed as the right one: signing the contract for a new project, a new event; expanding our activities with a new fair and a successful breakthrough among exhibitors and visitors; resounding international congresses at GR and then the feedback of satisfied organizers and participants; who praise our convention centre and exceptional GR team that really give their best.

Q: What kind of people/colleagues inspire you the most?

Dedicated and reliable with a lot of initiative.

Q: What is the best piece of advice you have for those working in the trade show business?

As our slogan says: *'Everything is possible!'* Believe, persist and do it even if it seems impossible. Opportunity is always within reach!

HUNGEXPO: REINFORCING ITS LEADING ROLE IN HUNGARY AS WELL AS THROUGHOUT THE CENTRAL-EASTERN EUROPEAN REGION

Interview with Gábor Ganczer, CEO of Hungexpo

INTERVIEW BY **NINA PRAPROTNİK**



PROFESSIONAL

Q: How did you get started in the industry? Did you ever consider doing anything else?

I began my career precisely 25 years ago at Hungary's greatest hotel operating firm. Here I gained experience in hosting conferences and banquets. I worked in various positions for years, managing multiple hotels and conference centers and these experiences helped me in adopting a new approach to managing an event center. In 2009, I became the CEO of Hungexpo Zrt. and came into closer contact with the exhibition industry. This is a highly intricate and complex task which you can never grow bored of, only you experience different aspects of it as a greater challenge over various periods, but actually I am not thinking about doing anything else with my time.

Q: What is the biggest change in the trade shows since you began working on them?

I feel that the B2C exhibitions have become increasingly specialized. Those of our events are truly successful which target a well-defined audience, whether it's hunters, motorbike or sailboat enthusiast. The age of grand, general fairs is over. The role of B2B exhibitions is growing year by year and it is precisely the financial crisis which showed that they are indispensable in the marketing mix of firms. Despite the gloomy forecasts, their role didn't decrease next to the growing importance of the Internet; quite to the contrary, their role has become more highly appreciated.

Q: What is the essence of the Hungexpo business model? What makes it the top exhibition organizing company in Hungary?

Hungexpo's approach is based on three pillars: our self-owned exhibitions still come in first, yet guest exhibitions and various international conferences also have an increasingly greater importance in our portfolio. Apart from organizing our own exhibitions, our goal is for Budapest to increase its presence on the international market as an attractive destination and for people to come visit us in increasingly higher numbers. We've opened our doors to conferences, congresses, and large-scale corporate events and we've shifted our HR strategy accordingly. Our current direction is based on flexible work-

force distribution, multi-functional leadership roles and many-sided work. In this process we rely on highly experienced colleagues as well as younger employees who are aware of the new trends. The appropriate infrastructure also plays a key role in this, since the French-owned GL events corporate group spent on developing the 36-hectare site including, amongst other things, the construction of a 22 million EUR multi-functional pavilion, giving us 70,000 square meters of indoor exhibition space. Still, personally, I am the proudest of the fine-tuned work of my team: we came up with a number of new exhibitions as well as developing the older ones and achieved significant success. To this very day, HUNGEXPO is the market leader in Hungary.

Q: Are you looking to expand your portfolio of trade shows in Eastern Europe?

One of Hungexpo's key objectives is to reinforce its leading role in Hungary as well as throughout the Central-Eastern European region. To this end, we are planning to introduce newly themed exhibitions as well as significant infrastructural developments. Our regional leading role can also be witnessed in the fact that a sizeable portion of the exhibitors and visitors at our events come from foreign countries, mainly from the neighboring countries.

Q: What do you think the future holds in the field of trade shows/fairs? Where do you see the potential for Hungexpo?

Years ago, the crisis deeply affected this industry - along with other parts of the economy. However, by now these are outweighed by the positive tendencies. Exhibitions usually forecast the changes to take place in the economy of the country in question. This is a cause for joy, since it means that if we're doing well, then the economy is also doing well, or at least it will in the immediate future. We're one of the companies which not only remained afloat over the recent decades, but also continued to develop itself and become increasingly profitable. At Hungexpo, we are continuously examining the market in order to supplement the company's range of events with successful fairs targeting the general public, apart from our professional events.

Q: Which trade shows do you expect will grow in the near future?

I mainly see the potential for growth in the field of industry, including the agricultural machine industry, and the automotive and food industries. We have highly successful events in these fields, some of which are new developments. These are the key sectors of the Central-Eastern European economies, so it's natural that they produce the greatest level of interest from exhibitors and professional audiences alike. Also, it's worth focusing on the theme of leisure time, since there is a great potential for development in cycling, active tourism, hunting and angling.

Q: How do you see the impact and effectiveness of a Hungarian National DMO?

Recently, reorganized and re-established the Hungarian National DMO, so the results and effectiveness of the new organization are too early to talk about. As the CEO of the largest professional event organizer and Federation of Hungarian Event Organizers and Suppliers, I consider it important that Hungary and

Budapest have uniform brand image so maybe more tourist and corporate event or guest to congress will come to Hungary. To do this, we provide all support and trust of the Hungarian National DMO successful operation.

MORE PERSONAL:

Q: How would you describe your job in under 50 words?

My colleagues and me do everything we can to preserve and reinforce the firm's positive image. Every day yields some development, every day we have challenges to face, and every day we'd like to give answers to these issues. Not a single minute of development goes to waste since an hour later it might be too late to act.

SHORT QUESTIONS:

Q: What are the best moments you remember from your work?

After every exhibition, we sit down with my colleagues and discuss our experiences and I can tell from the look of them that they are just as eager to be successful as I am. The most fantastic

experience of the recent period was the successful hosting of the European finals of the Bocuse d'Or, after which we were deeply congratulated by the International Bocuse Academy.

Q: What kind of people/co-workers inspire you the most?

Those who are independent enough to solve the arising problems, yet are still capable of thinking as a team - especially those who have enough foresight to start solving a problem before it even surfaces.

Q: What is the best advice you have for everyone working in the trade show business?

"Nothing is impossible, there's a solution for everything."



THERE IS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR EXPERIENCING PRODUCTS LIVE

Interview with Wolfgang Marzin, President and CEO of Messe Frankfurt

INTERVIEW BY NINA PRAPROTNIK



We create platforms that reflect the needs of our customers at all times and events that provide added value.



Q: How is the exhibition market changing?

Trade fairs are not static entities but always hold a mirror up to their markets. We observe the markets and sectors, adapt our concepts, orientations and points of focus to the latest developments and set the tone accordingly – in this way, we create platforms that reflect the needs of our customers at all times and events that provide added value. It is no accident that many of our trade fairs at our Frankfurt base are the leading events in their respective sectors.

Q: Why do you think people are still interested in exhibitions?

Exhibitors and visitors attend our trade fairs to meet other people with similar interests and to network. At trade fairs, people are brought together, deals are made and knowledge is shared. Above all in times of increasing digitalization, there is a growing need for formats that involve this kind of personal interaction. There is no substitute for experiencing products live and being able to see and touch them, for soaking up inspiration at first hand and striking up conversations with people – this is what makes trade fairs a unique experience.

Q: What makes a good exhibition organizer?

Messe Frankfurt's job is to combine the best from all over the world and from all branches at our events, thereby bringing supply and demand together – this is what our exhibitors and visitors trust us to do. Every day, our 2,244 employees work to establish a professional basis for doing business effectively. Our success in doing so can be attributed to our experience and know-how and to the working relationships that we have enjoyed with our partners for years.

Q: What do you believe are the key statistics determining ROI for exhibitors?

We give our exhibitors the necessary tools for successful trade fair activities and help them during all stages of the planning and implementation process. These include services relating to stand construction and technology, but also marketing measures and digital expertise. Having a well thought out trade fair preparation plan is half the battle.

Q: What do you think about this year's trade fairs and what are your company's biggest business challenges?

Event year 2016 has been extremely promising so far – in some cases, new records have been set for relevant key figures such as exhibitor count, visitor count, international participation and customer satisfaction. The most recent success reported was Automechanika in mid-September: with a total of 4,820 companies taking part, it recorded the highest exhibitor participation in the history of the event. One challenge in the trade fair business is responding appropriately to sector developments. The sectors that are relevant to us have their fair share of consolidations, mergers and closures, and this is re-

flected among retailers. Here, it is up to us to set the tone and to serve the needs of exhibitors and visitors as well as possible.

Q: Are the national and regional tourist organizations fulfilling their role in promoting trade fairs?

For the most part, our flagship events in Frankfurt are geared towards trade visitors – this means that these events do not attract tourists as such. As professional business platforms,

“There is no substitute for experiencing products live and being able to see and touch them, for soaking up inspiration at first hand and striking up conversations with people – this is what makes trade fairs a unique experience”

they firstly offer manufacturers and companies the opportunity to present their product innovations and to forge and cultivate business contacts. Secondly, international retailers use trade fairs to structure their product range.

PERSONAL BACKSTORY:

Q: What key business lessons have you learned over the years?

Success should always be attributed to a team performance and never to an individual person.

Q: What's your management style?

Collegial, team-oriented and straightforward.

Q: What would make your job easier?

Service professions are very demanding – but also extremely stimulating. Listening attentively and engaging in open communication is always helpful.

Q: The most memorable event for you?

There are many moments that I look back on fondly. Most of these are the result of long, hard work.

ABOUT WOLFGANG MARZIN:

Wolfgang Marzin is the President and CEO of Messe Frankfurt, one of the world's leading trade fair organizers, generating around € 648 million in sales and employing 2,244 people. Having studied business administration with a focus on foreign trade, he began his career in the meetings industry in 1990 as Exhibition Manager for Foreign Trade Fairs at IMAG Internationaler Messe- und Ausstellungsdiens Munich and continued with many managing positions through years at Messe München GmbH, Messe Düsseldorf North America, Gesellschaft für Handwerksmessen mbH, Leipziger Messe and from 2010 started his position as Member of the Board of Management at Messe Frankfurt, becoming President and CEO of Messe Frankfurt the same year.



IN REALITY NOTHING CAN EQUAL PERSONAL, DIRECT CONTACT

Interview with Corrado Peraboni, CEO of Fiera Milano



Organising exhibitions that are effective business tools, as well as being privileged places for learning about market evolution and professional updates.

Q: How is the exhibition market changing?

Over recent years it has definitely become a more global market, but also a more sectorial one. Specialisation driven by trade fairs has strengthened the function of business' development tools: taking part in exhibition events and dialoguing with the competition has become an essential requisite for continuing to be more competitive. Fiera Milano is well aware of this and strives to only offer effective, attractive events, which meet the expectations of Italian and international operators and are constantly aligned with evolution of the reference market.

The first production sectors we worked in are naturally those where Italy boasts a position of excellence and which, through our fairs can increase their global visibility: furnishings, agro-food, fashion-accessory, mechanics, packaging.

Q: Why do you think people are still interested in exhibitions?

Because they are valuable tools for business, innovation and (increasingly in recent years) internationalisation for companies—mainly small and medium enterprises—which represent the cornerstone of our economic system. Fairs are irreplaceable tools, even if the advent of internet for a while led us to think differently.

In reality, nothing can equal personal, direct contact between those looking for products or complex solutions for their business and those able to provide them, often adapting their goods or services to the specific needs of the client.

Q: What makes a good exhibition organiser?

Organising exhibitions that are effective business tools, as well as being privileged places for learning about market evolution and professional updates. There must obviously then be services, run both by the trade fair district and the city (and here I am referring to hospitality, transport, entertainment) to satisfy the increasingly more demanding expectations of a clientele of operators, most of them from outside Italy, who

have little time at their disposal and do not allow for inefficiencies.

Q: What do you believe are the key statistics determining ROI (RETURN ON INVESTMENT) for exhibitors?

First of all, visits registered to the stand, not only just in terms of quantity, but primarily in terms of quality, and the international component of those contacts; in the global economy we operate in today, the greater the latter, the more interesting the event. But also the number and weight of the (other) exhibitors are important. Number

and weight of the companies exhibiting in fact define the importance of the event for the sector, its representativeness and international appeal. For those events that while being trade fairs also deal in goods or services for the end consumer, another relevant factor for the exhibitor is also the influence the show has outside the pavilions that house it. Its capacity to activate a communication circuit that engages the consumer, arousing interest and curiosity around the goods sector the event represents. With its busy calendar of external events, which have by now become an event in itself, the Salone del Mobile (International Furniture Show) in Milan

has in this sense blazed a trail. A further evaluation criterion for the exhibitor is the quantity of contracts signed at the fair. But it often happens that contracts are finalised at a later date, so contacts are perhaps more important than contracts.

Q: What do you think about this year's trade fairs and what are your company's biggest business challenges?

We closed 2015 with very positive results (337 in turnover and 44 in Ebitda) and thanks also to the recent increase in capital, we can say that Fiera Milano is in a condition to look to the future with confidence. 2016 is, however, a difficult year because on our current calendar,

“Fairs are irreplaceable tools, even if the advent of internet for a while led us to think differently. In reality, nothing can equal personal, direct contact between those looking for products or complex solutions for their business and those able to provide them.”

even years are penalised by the absence of the big two-yearly events, which are concentrated in odd years. There is imbalance between even and odd years, and we are remedying this. In this direction, we have acquired Ipack-Ima, the international packing and packaging fair, and built around it an ambitious fair project called “The Innovation Alliance”. This will be name encompassing five so far separate fairs that will take place at Fiera Milano in May 2018: Ipack-Ima, Meat-Tech (meat packaging), Plast (plastics and rubber), Print4All (converting and industrial printing) and Intralogistica Italia (industrial handling). These five events each illustrate a different soul of Italian manufacturing excellence. They represent a sector worth 19.1 billion euros. In addition to this, Fiera Milan is moving along three paths: we want to increase the events held in Italy; extend our presence abroad thanks to partnership with the big international players; export our top “trade fair products”, through cloning of the same in other parts of the world. These are the cornerstones we are working on.

Q: Are the national and regional tourist organisations fulfilling their role in promoting trade fairs?

Local government (Comune di Milano and Regione Lombardia) together with Fiera Milano are definitely helping to get the beauty and great tourist vocation of Lombardy known throughout the world and promote the factors of appeal of our region in Italy and on the main international markets. Integrated promotion of these factors through contact with the public and operators at the most important fairs is a formidable strategic action for making the most of all the opportunities that our region has to offer.

PERSONAL PROFILE INTERESTING FACTS

Q: What key business lessons have you learned over the years?

If something has not worked so far, it is not a given that it will not work in the future.

Q: What’s your management style?

I am a sailor in my free time, therefore I believe it is fundamental that everyone on board has a clear idea of their task. Starting with the captain.

Q: What would make your job easier?

Being exhibition addicted.

Q: The most memorable event for you?

The next one opening.



ABOUT CORRADO PERABONI:

Corrado Peraboni has been CEO of Fiera Milano Spa since April 2015. With a degree in Law from the University of Milan in 1989, he boasts extensive experience in the trade fair sector. In June 2016 he was appointed Incoming President of UFI (Global Association of the Exhibition Industry), representing all the members of the trade fair sector in over 80 countries. He is currently secretary of the governing bodies of UFI.



TECHNOLOGY CANNOT REPLACE THE RELATIONSHIP THAT STARTS WITH A LIVE MEETING

Interview with Nick Pilbeam, Divisional Director for Reed Exhibitions



Business worldwide thrives on face-to-face meetings. Discussions, debates, negotiations are always best done this way and we believe this will always be the case.



Q: How is the exhibition market changing?

The current changes in the exhibition market are a reflection of the changing expectations of our customers. They have more personalised options to do business but in an increasingly time-poor environment, so the relevance and value of meetings and connections is now vital to ensure better return-on-investment and continuing customer satisfaction. As organisers our role now is to be relationship brokers and not just deliver a physical space for customers to meet. The emphasis is on advanced digital and data solutions to achieve this.

Q: Why do you think people are still interested in exhibitions?

Business worldwide thrives on face-to-face meetings. Discussions, debates, negotiations are always best done this way and we believe this will always be the case. Even though technology of course plays its part in the process of business, it cannot replace the relationship that starts with a live meeting! At the same time, exhibitions create the environment

where connections are made, where friends choose to meet up once a year and where new relationships are developed. It's the showcase for brands to stand out, to promote themselves and to meet with the industry trade press. All of this is what a trade show floor creates, there is no replacement. Time is an increasingly scarce resource and our research shows that this coupled with the human factor and the importance of real relationship building and trust, face-to-face events supported by world-class digital products will continue to be a core part of doing business globally into the future.

Q: What makes a good exhibition organizer?

Two things. Firstly, deliver tangible value to customers, specifically understanding and meeting their varied objectives such as being the platform for driving sales, building networks, building knowledge, making new connections and discovering new innovations – this is critical for satisfying customers and in return building sustainable and value-adding exhibitions. Secondly, flawless delivery of safe, secure, professional,

timely and customer-orientated friendly shows are simply hygiene factors and non-negotiable in this industry. Delivery excellence is at the core of how Reed Exhibitions runs its business and delivers value for customers.

Q: What do you believe are the key statistics determining ROI for exhibitors?

There are many factors that will determine an exhibitor's ROI and measurements will reflect their individual objectives for participating in an event. Identifying objectives and ROI measures is an important aspect of the pre-event planning.

The agreed objective, for example to launch a new product, increase sales or raise brand awareness will influence whether a more quantitative or qualitative ROI measure is appropriate as well as the timeframe over which ROI is calculated by exhibitors. We evaluate the event experience through exhibitor feedback and this insight informs continuous development in our offering to customers.

“Even though technology of course plays its part in the process of business, it cannot replace the relationship that starts with a live meeting!”

Q: What do you think about this year's trade

fairs and what are your company's biggest business challenges?

At the heart of every one of our shows this year and in the future is innovation, networking and practical education. Our challenge is to provide the content for each of these initiatives at every event. We also recognize that sometimes at large-scale events, it is not always easy to find and meet the ideal new business partner, supplier or customer however we have the data and technology now to help make the right connections and relationships happen.

Q: Are the national and regional tourist organizations fulfilling their role in promoting trade fairs?

Tourism boards are a key part of the exhibition industry and can provide a strong platform to both promoting their destination and preparing this route to market for the benefit of the private sector from that destination. We see some tourist boards making the most of trade fairs, through promotion to the buyer communities in the target markets, sourcing and support-



ing the relevant suppliers for the marketplace being targeted, all supported by over-arching destination branding and experiential activity. More recently we are seeing an increased move into the digital arena around trade fairs providing a holistic approach across these online and offline channels, all to increase the effectiveness of their involvement in these events. That said, there are a lot of ways to drive value from trade fairs and some tourist board are missing out on some of the pockets of value.

PERSONAL BACKSTORY:

Q: What key business lessons have you learned over the years?

Preparation is critical - for a meeting, for a sales pitch for a launch, for just about any business interaction, in my view fortune favours the bold and prepared. Great people working together and going in the same direction make a phenomenal difference to business performance and team engagement.

Q: What's your management style?

Approachable, collaborative and change orientated. We live in an era where there is a burgeoning amount of data both in our private and professional lives as well as the fact that digital developments continue to disrupt significant parts of society and the professional arena – these two areas continue to be an area of professional interest and focus going forward.

Q: The most memorable event for you?

Growing up in South Africa, the moment when Nelson Mandela, wearing a Springbok rugby

ABOUT NICK PILBEAM:

Nick Pilbeam is the Divisional Director for Reed Exhibitions' travel division, which includes the global portfolios of leading brands such as World Travel Market, ILTM and IBTM. He joined Reed Exhibitions in January 2015, bringing with him over 15 years of FTSE 100 experience in the travel industry from his previous roles with British Airways and Avios. At Reed Exhibitions he is responsible for over 20 travel industry events taking place throughout the year in Europe, the Americas, Asia, the Middle East and Africa.

jersey and hat, shook hands and congratulated the World Cup winning South Africa team captain Francois Pienaar on the global stage, was a great moment in the country's history to be able to witness and be a part of.

