



January 2009

Exhibition survey shows excellent results for EuroBLECH 2008

After years of continued growth, 2008 saw a downturn of the economic situation for the sheet metal working industry. However, this was hardly apparent at the 20th EuroBLECH exhibition from 21-25 October 2008 in Hanover, Germany. Throughout the leading trade fair for this industry there was lively trading activity, and many exhibitors were able to report buoyant sales figures.

EuroBLECH 2008 was the largest ever event in its long history. With 1,520 exhibitors and 69,400 visitors the show recorded an increase of 8% in both exhibitor and visitor numbers compared to the 2006 show. The net exhibition space had increased by 15% to 87,700 m².

As with previous exhibitions, EuroBLECH 2008 is an officially controlled trade show, audited by FKM, Society for voluntary control of Fair and Exhibition Statistics. The exhibition survey which now has been completed showed excellent ratings for the event by exhibitors as well as visitors.

International contact point for sheet metal professionals

The show was yet again extremely highly rated for its internationality, with exhibiting companies coming from 38 countries and registered visitors from 98 countries. 44.5% of exhibitors and 35% of visitors came from outside Germany.

Top 10 exhibitor countries were Germany, Italy, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Spain, the USA, Turkey, France, Austria and China.

Main visitor origins were Germany, Benelux, Switzerland, Scandinavia, Italy, France, Turkey and Poland. The increase in visitor numbers came from the whole of Europe including Germany. This reflected the main target market of the exhibitors. While visitor numbers from Central and South America, Africa and Australia were up, visitor numbers from North America and Asia had decreased.

Position of the sheet metal industry

Exhibitors rated the economic situation of the industry as being more critical than in 2006. However, while a majority of the German exhibitors (57%) assessed the economic position of the sheet metal industry to still be favourable, only 31% of the foreign exhibitors rated the current situation as positive. The uncertain economic

forecast is reflected by the fact that 34% of German and 54% of foreign exhibiting companies evaluated the recent industry situation as ambiguous.

In this economic climate, approaching new markets played an important role. Major target markets were seen to be in EU countries including Germany as well as in the rest of Europe, followed by Asia and the Americas. When asked about important future markets, Russia was ranked first, followed by Germany, India, China and the complete east European region.

Attracting new customers, product presentation and customer care were the main aims of exhibiting at EuroBLECH 2008.

Within the individual exhibition categories, there were only marginal shifts in exhibitor numbers as well as visitor interests. Forming technology; sheet metal, semi-finished and finished products; separation technology; machine elements; tool/die technology and joining technology remained the main categories of interest. Tube and section working have gained in importance since the previous show.

Visitor profile

Exhibitors again particularly praised the event for the high quality of the visitors as well as the large amount of specialist visitors and expert talks at their stands. The percentage of trade visitors was 99.5%, an even higher percentage than in 2006. According to the survey, 68% of all visitors had decisive or co-decisive decision-making capacity; as for visitors from outside Germany this percentage was 78%. 44% of the visitors had come to Hanover with concrete investment plans; again, for foreign visitors the percentage was even higher, at 56%. These figures equal the percentages of 2006.

In terms of the economic sectors within which visitors were active, there was a clear shift towards industry: 81% of all visitors came from within the secondary sector (+4% compared with 2006). Visitor numbers from services and trade were regressive compared to the previous show; the percentage of visitors from workshops remained the same. In terms of company size, the show had an above average increase in visitors from larger companies with more than 500 employees. The main areas of responsibility of visitors were fabrication/production, management, R&D and construction as well as procurement.

The growth in visitor numbers at EuroBLECH 2008 primarily came from the engineering and sheet metal and products sectors, the automotive industry and its suppliers as well as iron and steel production. There was a substantial increase in visitors from middle management.

According to the survey, visitors mainly expected information about technical enhancements, a general overview of what is available, contact with suppliers and to find new products for potential use. At the exhibition stand visitors chiefly expected personal consultations (76%) and practical machine demonstrations (60%).

Excellent overall results

With a record mark of 1.8* visitors gave EuroBLECH 2008 an even better overall rating than two years ago (1.9*). 99% of the visitors assessed the exhibition as very useful or useful compared to other industry shows; 93% of the visitors said they would definitely recommend the trade show to colleagues.

Exhibitors were also extremely satisfied with the outcome of the show and awarded EuroBLECH 2008 an overall mark of 2.1* (2006: 2.0*). The percentage of exhibitors intending to exhibit again at the next event has increased to 76%. EuroBLECH 2010 will be held from 26-30 October 2010 in Hanover, Germany.

** On a scale from 1= very good to 5 = poor*

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