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Unprecedented success for EuroBLECH 2006

“This year’s EuroBLECH, the 19th International Sheet Metal Working Technology Exhibition, showed record breaking results,” stated Nicola Hamann, show director of EuroBLECH on behalf of exhibition organiser Mack Brooks Exhibitions. “We are delighted by this great success and the positive feedback we received from the participants. The lively trading activity and buoyant atmosphere in the halls throughout the exhibition clearly showed that this industry sector is on the upswing. We want to congratulate our exhibitors and visitors on their success and thank them for their excellent cooperation.”

The leading exhibition for this industry sector featured 1409 exhibitors from 40 countries. On extended exhibition grounds in Hanover (Germany) more exhibitors than ever before presented the complete range of machines, tools, systems and services for sheet metal working, with new technologies showcased for the very first time. This record number of exhibitors (+5.5% compared to 2004) was matched by a record number of visitors: 64300 visitors came to Hanover this year, 6% more than last time. This increase is entirely due to foreign visitors from a total of 70 countries (in 2004: 55 countries).

A cosmopolitan flavour

The ratio of German to foreign exhibitors was 57% to 43% this year. This time, exhibitors came from 40 countries (in 2004: 31 countries). Other than Germany and Italy, major exhibitor countries were Switzerland, the Netherlands and France. The USA and Taiwan also figured amongst the top ten exhibitor countries.

The number of visitors coming from outside Germany had grown by 20%. Large increases in international visitors came from Asia, where the figure had doubled, and from the EU countries (+16%), where visitors from central and eastern European countries accounted for the largest increase. Visitor figures from the remaining eastern European countries also increased by a third. There was a noticeable growth in visitors from North America (+40%) compared to 2004, whilst the figures for Central and South America had diminished by a third. Next to Germany, top visitor countries were the Netherlands, Italy, Switzerland, Poland and India.

Markets and industry sectors

Exhibitors judged the economic outlook in their own industry much more favourably than two years ago. However, German exhibitors believed the economic situation to be even more favourable than their foreign counterparts and larger companies assessed their sales forecasts more positively than smaller companies.

According to exhibitors surveyed at EuroBLECH 2006, alongside customer acquisition and product presentation, the most important objective for exhibiting at EuroBLECH is the extension of business in new markets. Primary target markets are the EU countries, including Germany, followed by the remaining eastern and western European countries. Within the non-European regions, Asia is the most promising market followed by North America. The exhibitor survey showed excellent results in terms of the presence of visitor target groups from these regions. This applies particularly for the EU countries, including Germany, and Asia. However, according to exhibitors, the presence of US visitors should be further increased.

Asked about future top markets in their industry sector the exhibitors highlighted Germany followed by Russia, China, India, the USA and Poland.

Within the individual exhibition categories, there were only marginal shifts in exhibitor numbers as well as visitor interests. The increase in exhibitors was noticeable throughout all categories. Slightly more products and systems were exhibited in categories such as data processing, CAD/CAM and services.

In terms of the categories in which visitors were primarily interested, the main categories were: sheet metal and semi-finished products; sheet metal parts and finished products; forming technology; separation technology and tool/die technology.

Specialist visitors with concrete investment plans

Exhibitors particularly praised the high quality of the visitorship as well as the large amount of specialist visitors at their stands. The figure for specialist visitors was over 99% this time, and the proportion of visitors who are directly involved in decision-making has grown by more than 20% over 2004. According to the survey 70% of all visitors at EuroBLECH 2006 have decisive or co-decisive decision-making capacity. Almost half of all visitors (45%) came to Hanover with concrete investment plans; the percentage of foreign visitors with concrete investment plans was 56%.

Two thirds of the visitors were either middle or top management level or independent entrepreneurs. 76% worked in industry and the rest was evenly spread over workshops, services and trade. The presence of visitors from services and trade has continuously increased over the years. Half of the visitorship were from companies with less than 100 employees.

In terms of the sectors to which the visitors belonged, there was a noticeable increase in steel and aluminium construction (+23% compared to 2004) and in sheet metal and products (+24%). The number of visitors from the electrical industry has tripled since 2004. Only the automotive industry and its suppliers sent slightly fewer visitors than two years ago.

What visitors chiefly want from their visit to the exhibition, according to the survey, is information about enhanced technology and industry trends as well as a general overview of new products for potential use. Contacts for suppliers and customers are also an important reason to visit the show. 73% of all visitors expect personal advice at the stand and 58% wish to see live demonstrations of machinery.

Positive outlook for 2008

Visitors at this year's show were highly satisfied and gave EuroBLECH even better marks than two years ago: a mark of 1.8* for the comprehensiveness of the exhibition range (in 2004: 2.0*) and a mark of 2.0* for the internationality (in 2004: 2.1*). A record 1.9* was awarded as a general mark from all visitors; foreign visitors alone awarded 1.7*. 25% of all visitors were exclusive visitors i.e. they visit no other exhibition than EuroBLECH.

The exhibitors were extremely satisfied with the outcome of their exhibition participation and awarded EuroBLECH 2006 a higher general mark than ever before: 2.0* (in 2004: 2.2*). They gave a mark of 1.9* for the comprehensiveness of the range (in 2004: 2.0) and 2.0* for the internationality (in 2004: 2.1*).

It is therefore not surprising that almost three quarters of the exhibiting companies (71% of the German and 74% of the international exhibitors) are already planning to participate in EuroBLECH 2008 which will be held from 21st to 25th October 2008 in Hanover, Germany.

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