

Press release

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The challenge posed by *millennials* to the industry of exhibitions

Carolina Del Pozo
Tel. +54 9 11 4514 1400
prensa@argentina.messefrankfurt.com
www.argentina.messefrankfurt.com
Press and Communication Manager
Natalia Porta

Trade fairs are far from disappearing, but digitalization and "Y Generation" force them to reinvent themselves in order to be profitable. More "emotional" events who nobody wants to miss, among the key concepts.

Innovative, self-assured and flexible, though more inhibited when it comes to personal contact: millennials, that is to say, the generation born between 1980 and 1996, are growing up and start holding more decision making positions in marketing and sales areas of companies.

This represents a great challenge for the industry of exhibitions. How to plan attractive B2B events for this audience, who is used to "live" in the digital world? What do they expect from future and potential participants?

A recent study from EBS University of Business and Law from Germany, in cooperation with Messe Frankfurt, the largest organizing company of events and exhibitions with own premises worldwide, provided some interesting data that show the phenomenon.

The research indicates that, though the digitalization advance and the wide range of online communication possibilities, millennials still value personal interaction and see trade fairs as an ideal "mixture" of marketing.

More than a fourth part of the surveyed people, all young men and women from 18 to 30 years old, stated that the access to contact networks is a key factor to visit them. And though almost half of them admitted to have some inhibitions when it comes to approach unknown people, actions and networking apps facilitate said task: they use it as the first step to the necessary personal contact.

"The industry is currently facing two important challenges that go hand in hand. One of them is the growing digitalization, and the other one is this great generational change that brings about new needs, a different view of the world in general and that demands other kind of events", says Fernando Gorbarán, President and CEO of Messe Frankfurt Argentina, the subsidiary that the German company has in our country.

Indexpert Messe Frankfurt
Luis María Campos Av. 1061 - P 5°
C1426BOI, Buenos Aires
Argentina

"Millennials know that a lot of which you can get in a traditional exhibition –contacts, news, networks, etc.- can be achieved through the cell phone. Why do they choose to take part in exhibitions then? It is a discussion

which has been held for a long time in the sector but I believe we should not be alarmed: it is a matter of listening to the different target groups and aligning their needs with the corresponding industrial sector”, states Gorbarán.

Appeal to emotions and “sense of belonging”

The research’s findings suggest that, in order to be attractive for millennials, exhibitions should turn themselves into more emotional experiences, something that visitors and exhibitors do not want to miss. Specialists call this feeling “FOMO” (Fear of Missing Out”).

It comes to design proposals in such a way that everybody wants to form part of this community, both before, during and after the event. For this reason, exhibitions should develop in a more precise and differentiated way, with new items such as renowned speakers and the use of virtual and augmented reality. The interactive events and the size and reputation of them are also key factors.

“In our case, we are developing more user-friendly websites, we also implement self-service registration systems in the premises and apps to facilitate access to information”, tells Gorbarán. “The experiences such as live customization of a car or skills competitions have also given us very good results. Even in some events we have hired actors that interact with visitors and generate a better interaction between the audience and the exhibitors”, he adds.

Gorbarán states that the idea is not competing against digitalization and generational changes, but quite the opposite: “Messe Frankfurt as a company has organized fairs for 778 years in Germany and in the rest of the world. In Argentina we have organized exhibitions with decades of history, such as Automechanika Buenos Aires or BIEL Light + Building, and we even generate new ones, such as the International Motorcycle Show of Argentina, which will have its first edition this year. This shows that the business is more alive than ever, but you have to know how to read the phenomenon, adapt to changes and be constantly creative”, he finishes.

Further information:

www.argentina.messefrankfurt.com

Press information and photographic material:

<https://ar.messefrankfurt.com/buenosaires/en/journalists/press-welcome.html>

Links to websites:

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Background information on Messe Frankfurt

Messe Frankfurt is the world’s largest trade fair, congress and event organiser with its own exhibition grounds. With more than 2,400 employees at 30 locations, the company generates annual sales of around €669 million. Thanks to its far-reaching ties with the relevant sectors and to its international sales network, the Group looks after the business interests of its

customers effectively. A comprehensive range of services – both onsite and online – ensures that customers worldwide enjoy consistently high quality and flexibility when planning, organising and running their events. The wide range of services includes renting exhibition grounds, trade fair construction and marketing, personnel and food services. With its headquarters in Frankfurt am Main, the company is owned by the City of Frankfurt (60 percent) and the State of Hesse (40 percent).

For more information, please visit our website at:

www.messefrankfurt.com | www.congressfrankfurt.de | www.festhalle.de

Background information on Messe Frankfurt Argentina

Messe Frankfurt Argentina is the affiliate of the worldwide trade fair organization leader. The purpose of the fairs is to promote actual business meetings to boost activity in regional markets, in the domestic market and in turn prompt the development of the technological pole in each area. The current portfolio of shows of Messe Frankfurt Argentina includes the following exhibitions: Automechanika Buenos Aires, BIEL Light + Building Buenos Aires, Confemaq, Emitex, ExpoCehap, ExpoFerretera, ExpoMant, International Motorcycle Show of Argentina, Intersec Buenos Aires, Simatex, Tecno Fidta. In addition to numerous congresses and special events for third party, such as Argentina Oil & Gas Expo Buenos Aires, Argentina Oil and Gas Expo Patagonia, Arminera and Electronics Home, among others.

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