

fairs. While about four-fifth have some purchase decision influence, and about one-fifth are the final decision-maker, less than ten percent actually contract for purchase at the fair because that decision is often a group activity, which precludes a commitment at the fair²⁴.

A TRADE FAIR TYPOLOGY

Target market	Trade fair type	Product differentiation	Supply side	Demand side
World	Global/international	Global products/ problem solutions	Global	Global
Europe*	Global/international	European products/ problem solutions	Global	Europe
National	National	Differentiated country products/specific problem solutions for the national market	Europe	National
Regional	Regional	Differentiated national products/specific problem solutions for the regional/national market	National	National

- Europe is used as an example but the typology applies to other world regions such as North America, South East Asia, Latin America.

Visitors serious about purchase prepare systematically and spend most of their time pursuing their agenda. For more than four-fifth of them that includes checking out products or innovations on offer and gathering information on them. Visitors' schedules are hectic, 83% spend only one or two days visiting an average of 11 exhibitors. Exhibitors, therefore, must primarily be prepared for the *planned* visitors²⁵.

But we also wish to shed some light on the trade fair selection decision, the role, benefits and performance of fairs. Companies must make their choice in a crowded and confusing trade fair market, e.g. Hanover industrial fair has nearly 6000 exhibitors, and attracts one-half million visitors²⁶. Of importance are the global reach of the fair, type of customer targeted and reached, purchase decision influence of visitors, support services of organizers, logistical aspects, and cost of participation²⁷. Thus, the selection decision is influenced by company objectives, the audience and is taken in a complex multi-stimuli environment of expanding venues²⁸.

The next task is managing the fair participation process. All activities before, during and after the fair need to be clearly formulated and effectively implemented. The whole issue of exhibiting well and managing the interface with visitors is critical to the success of participation. Trade