

The concept of interactive networking will increasingly become a feature of trade fair and trade mission activity. These interactions involve exhibitors and visitors (customers and other buyers), competitors, partners (agents, representatives, distributors), industry associations (trade associations, chambers of commerce, other sector or interest groups), trade fair organizers, trade fair associations, regulators, and government programs (export promotion programs at various governmental levels)⁷².

Conclusions and Implications:

This paper attempted to provide answers to the four questions posed: the need for export promotion has been explained, a state-of-the-art view of trade fairs and missions was given, the present and future of trade fair and mission evaluation was presented, and the role of trade fairs and missions in the future was discussed. The answers provide both appraisal and directions.

To predict trade patterns beyond broad dimensions, to anticipate spheres of influence and political climates, the emergence of alliances and new opportunities, and which particular implications they have for trade fairs and missions, is hazardous. It is noteworthy that lately changes are occurring more frequently and more rapidly and have had a more severe impact. For example, some countries may find their exports drop dramatically, after many years of steady growth. A nation's political stability can disintegrate in a matter of months or weeks, as we saw in the former east bloc countries, and with it trade patterns and prospects are profoundly affected⁷³.

Internationalization of markets is a process that will continue to place a premium on companies' abilities to compete. Two consequences emanate from this: i) the ability to function inter-culturally, and ii) the continuing need for learning. Competitive competence is a generic requirement. Trade fairs and missions play different but important roles in this context. Government support provided through fairs and missions then responds to specific needs in the private sector.

Advances in technology and communications are expected to speed the pace and intensity of competition further. For governments resources are at a premium. Programs will need justification in terms of targeting, goals and objectives, needs-focused delivery, and impact evaluation in the context of broader benefit. The trend towards privatization will likely affect export support programs and lessons can be learned from private-sector-based export promotion