

Europe make new demands on the role of fairs. Economic developments both necessitate and promote the growing internationalization of trade fairs. Specialization of trade fairs is a clear response to the need of both exhibitors and visitors for increased efficiency of interaction.

Exhibitors and visitors want more focus in the competitive setting⁶². This trend has been clear since the early 1980s in Germany, Italy and France⁶³. Freer market access globally by companies will not only intensify competition, but trade fairs in particular will need to sharpen their focus to facilitate contact development, intelligence gathering, and consulting/counselling by exhibitors and visitors alike⁶⁴.

The image of trade fair venues, and with it that of organizers, will increasingly influence the choices companies and export promotion programs make. This does not preclude the existence of smaller or minor, regional or national fairs. But it does suggest that segmentation of fairs, as suggested earlier in the trade fair typology, is likely to become sharper. The shift towards preference for specialized fairs will require that trade fair concepts become clearly differentiated, closely tailored to exhibitor and visitor targets. Overall, the four constituents, organizers, exhibitors, visitors, and government, will influence and benefit from this process.

Competition between trade fairs will increase. They must establish or solidify a real presence in markets that present the key to their economic survival. This calls for agility and flexibility to respond to changes in, say, production patterns (location, technology etc.) and purchasing patterns⁶⁵.

Organizers thus will be concerned with *event value* as a means of competitive advantage. This means - they must deliver the greatest number of quality visitors (those with a distinct need for solutions and/or goods, and decision influence) from the markets targeted by the exhibitor, - they must provide a comprehensive choice of focused competitors (by industry, technology, market etc.) to visitors with specific problems or needs, - they must provide state-of-the-art support systems to their constituents, - they must provide information on event- and post-event behaviour on and to exhibitors and visitors. Indeed, better information on characteristics and behaviour of exhibitors and visitors, thus greater transparency, will aid in their respective decisions to select and attend fairs. European trade fair organizations are contemplating the creation of a 'eurofair database' towards this end⁶⁶.