

## **Trade Shows and Communication 2.0 – “CEFA-Professional Seminar 2017”**

**Digitisation and disruptive changes in communication massively impact the entire economy and not least the trade show and exhibition sector. 19 Cefa trade show experts from eight nations met for the traditional CEFA Professional Seminar on 9 and 10 May to discuss the implications of Communication 2.0 on the exhibition industry. The focus of the discussions and deliberations was on topical and practical examples. The bottom line of the seminar: many questions need still to be answered and we are heading into an exciting future.**

In his introductory keynote address, Bernhard Erler (Kärntner Messen) provided an extensive theoretical overview and presented a three-dimensional grid that facilitates the use of Communication 2.0 in strategic and systematic terms; with the most important target groups being the first dimension, the timescale of the trade show project business the second and the individual tools being the third dimension.

### **Best Practises**

The presentation of best practice examples of various trade show organisations gave a stimulating insight into the practical side of this burning issue. Vincent Aydin (Messe München) demonstrated how Open Innovation is put to targeted use at the “ISPO” and “BAUMA” trade shows as a way of helping leading exhibitors to establish innovative product developments and/or new sales channels. Dimitris Kurkuridis (TIF-Helexpo) explained the effect of hosted buyers on the tourism environment of a trade show venue. The permanent networking of exhibitors and visitors by means of big data was the topic of Florian Moritz’ (Reed Salzburg and Vienna) presentation. He identified one vital success factor within Communication 2.0: “We do not need a digital strategy but a strategy for a digital world. “ Jiri Smetana (BVV Brno) and Aleksander Ivkovic (Belgrade Trade Sows) presented the holistic digitisation measures of their respective companies.

The exhibitors feature prominently in all deliberations about Communication 2.0. Karla Juegel (Messe Marketing Munich) focused on this perspective, and one of the core theses of her presentation was that the task of organisers is to maximise success for all their exhibitors. “We need to coach our exhibitors, show them what they need to do for putting their key messages successfully across to their target customers.”

### **Pragmatism is called for**

The participants all agreed on one thing: small and medium-size companies must approach this issue pragmatically and weigh-up their odds. The simple fact is they don’t have the know-how, personnel and monetary resources of global players. A proven strategy thus involves careful watching of the steps and measures taken by the industry leaders and thoroughly examining their concepts. It is also important to use only those Communication 2.0 tools that provide true added value for exhibitors and visitors. Everybody agreed that the content will play an even greater role in communication in future.

In addition to the technical presentations and the discussions hosted by Janos Barabas (Secretary General of CEFA), the side events offered plenty of opportunity to go deep into the details. Klaus Dittrich (Messe München) was a charming host, and Nina Schniering (Messe München) and her team did an excellent job organising the CEFA-Professional Seminars 2017 in a highly professional manner.

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