

# PRESS RELEASE

Hatten, 11.03.2024

## Valuable contacts and stimulating retail topics: participants draw a positive conclusion after the 36th IAW Trade Fair in Cologne

The 36th International Trade Fair for Retail Promotions and Imports (IAW) came to highly successful conclusion after three days full of lively discussions, exciting programme highlights and a wide range of products presented by 285 exhibitors from 26 countries, including 50 first-time exhibitors from 16 countries.

„Although the consumer climate in Germany is creating a difficult environment for retailers, we still see very good future opportunities for our sector, which offers products that really meet the needs of many consumers on a tight budget,“ reports Project Manager Kerstin Manke.

The goods presented by the exhibitors to business customers were of the usual high quality. The products on show were just as diverse: from springtime offers and garden furniture to seasonal and fan merchandise, toys, confectionery and home accessories, visitors were treated to a wide range of products from companies with international operations.

„The entire retail spectrum is always presented at the IAW Fair, and buyers receive lots of inspiration here,“ says organiser Ulrich Zimmermann. The event is characterised by affordable prices and the favourable terms that purchasers receive from the retailers on site. „Of course, the goods on special offer are particularly attractive,“ adds the organiser.

Overall the comments on the event from exhibitors had a positive ring. „The trade fair is going very well, Monday in particular was a good day,“ sums up Oliver Reichstein, Sales Manager at TopTen. In addition to the existing customers who traditionally attend the trade fair, contacts are regularly made with new faces. And the international mix of visitors also delighted the exhibitors: „We have a lot of customers here from all over Europe,“ reports for example Erwin Verhaert, Account Manager at Top Brands from the Netherlands.

With around 5,400 visitors a slight increase in footfall was recorded, even though visitor travel was affected by factors including the current high hotel prices in the Cologne trade fair area and strikes by transport operators, which disrupted many travel plans. On the positive side, a number of product categories benefited from synergies with the hardware trade fair taking place at the same time. The duration of the event was again perceived as favourable: „Three days is the perfect length for a trade show,“ emphasises Frank Werm, Managing Director of OSMA Werm GmbH, which has been taking part in the IAW Fair for many years now.

The increasing relevance of this trade fair as a sourcing platform for online retailing was evident everywhere at the IAW, with many suppliers intensively involved in digital business operations. As Account Manager Ahmet Türke from HATEX Group reports, many of the customers present are increasingly focussing on online trading.

This topic was also the focus of another highlight of the IAW trade fair: the E-Commerce Arena, which took place for the 18th time. Twenty-six top speakers from the industry took to the stage in the centre of the E-Commerce Quarter to talk about their experiences in online retailing. „This trade show was



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very much about Amazon and artificial intelligence," says Stefan Grimm, organiser of the E-Commerce Arena and co-founder of RESTPOSTEN.de and grosshandel.eu. The organisers believe it is important to impart the skills required to deal with the complexity and fast pace of developments on the market.

One of the highlights of this year's Arena was the well-attended presentation by Florian Arndt, CEO of the film agency Sons of Motion Pictures from Leipzig. Florian Arndt uses artificial intelligence in all areas of film production and has already won numerous awards for his work. In his keynote speech, accompanied by apple pie and confetti, he impressed the audience with his experiences involving AI tools, film production and the opportunities that digital change is opening up for the retail sector.

According to Stefan Grimm, the topics of Amazon and AI are now key and have become an integral part of the retail business. Looking ahead, he predicts that discussion of subjects such as market conformity, product development and internationalisation will become increasingly important for the future of the sector.

Kai Lindemann also inspired his audience with fascinating reports on everyday business life. The founder and CEO of electronics wholesaler kalitec talked about the initial difficulties his company faced, his successful and early entry into online retailing and the opportunities offered by present-day tools. „It has never been as easy to start up as it is now," says Lindemann. But if you want to be successful in business, you have to learn to keep up with the times and always stay one step ahead of the competition.

The 36th IAW Trade Fair was characterised by valuable contacts and successful sales talks. With its thematic focus and enjoyable atmosphere, the fair was a memorable experience for trade visitors and exhibitors from all over the world. The next IAW Trade Fair will take place in Halls 6 and 9 from 3 to 5 September 2024.



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