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## Trade fairs: “The same procedure as every year?”

**At the beginning of the year at the latest, we highlight the dates in the business calendar when relevant events relating to printing and paper are being held. But the question quickly arises: Do such events actually still exist? Is the heyday of the original trade fairs not a thing of the past? Today, digitization is spreading everywhere in our society.**

The internet of things, along with smartphones, tablet computers and social (online) networks, have left their mark, as we all know. Particularly in an age of changing information and communication habits, trade fairs are subject to profound change.

### **Many complain, yet...**

The “mix” of exhibitions and presentations, congresses, as well as talks and workshops is now quite normal. Organizers often still succeed in presenting a wide variety of topics, showing important technology areas and market developments. Events such as the [Interpack](#) packaging trade fair or the [drupa](#) and print cross-media show this year are noteworthy as current examples.

Let’s be honest: As soon as the next trade fair is announced, many in the print media industry will start moaning and complaining again. Some are questioning their attendance at trade fairs nowadays. Of course, as an exhibitor, you have to participate because competitors are also represented there. But this often comes at considerable costs: booth personnel, flights

and travel, booth rentals and hotel rooms, equipping/designing the booth, machine transport, visitor and customer advertising, public relations in trade magazines...

Even if you are “only” a visitor there, your company will incur some expenses. And these costs, which are usually not low, have to be refinanced by new sales and profits.

### **Significance of today's marketing**

Such discussions with correspondingly powerful arguments will have certainly also been held at least once in your company. Perhaps you have organized your own “open house” event for customers and interested parties, an event together with partner companies or even taken part at a regional event as an exhibitor?

You will be aware of the significance of marketing for your business. Nevertheless, the focus on the internet – with the benefits of distributing audiovisual content, with business models such as sales portals, the fascinating possibilities of smartphones and tablets – has changed some companies' marketing strategy. I suspect that the strong presence of the World Wide Web means that the perception of trade fairs' significance will continue to suffer.

Nevertheless, we mustn't forget that information on the internet alone is by no means enough. Trade fairs provide an overview of the market according to the “who's who” principle, are contact exchanges and platforms for acquisition, hubs for technology and knowledge transfer, and also provide impetus for investment decisions in the next innovation.

drupa 2020 will probably surprise us with an exciting market overview. Isn't it time for making new contacts? Perhaps we'll meet in person in the Rhine metropolis of Düsseldorf in June – in any event, I look forward to some interesting conversations.

Your

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