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EXHIBITION MANAGEMENT AS A POWERFUL TOOL OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Introduction. Exhibitions are among the most effective ways of communicating with the public. They can produce excellent results for an organisation if the public relations practitioner makes use of all the opportunities they present. Exhibitions are not a public relations medium, but a tool if used to create awareness, enhance reputation as well as to sell products. Commercial exhibitions, generally called trade fairs, trade shows or expos, are usually organized so that organizations in a specific interest or industry can display and demonstrate their latest products, service, study activities of rivals and examine recent trends and opportunities. Some trade fairs are open to the public, while others can only be attended by company representatives (members of the trade) and members of the press [1, p. 214].

Objectives. The main objective of this research is to determine the role of exhibition activities in marketing and public relations.

Presenting main material. An exhibition, in the most general sense, is an organized presentation and display of a selection of items. In practice, exhibitions usually occur within museums, galleries and exhibition halls, and World's Fairs. Exhibitions may be permanent displays or temporary, but in common usage, exhibitions are considered temporary and usually scheduled to open and close on specific dates. While many exhibitions are shown in just one venue, some exhibitions are shown in multiple locations and are called *travelling exhibitions*, and some are *online exhibitions*.

A trade exhibition or expo is an exhibition organized so that companies in a specific industry can present and demonstrate their latest products and services, meet with industry partners and customers, study activities of rivals, and examine recent

market trends and opportunities. In contrast to consumer fairs, only some trade fairs are open to the public, while others can only be attended by company representatives (members of the trade, e.g. professionals) and members of the press, therefore trade shows are classified as either «*public*» or «*trade only*». A few fairs are hybrids of the two; one example is the Frankfurt Book Fair, which is *trade only* for its first three days and *open to the public* for its final two days. They are held on a continuing basis in virtually all markets and normally attract companies from around the globe. For example, in the U.S., there are currently over 10,000 trade shows held every year, and several online directories have been established to help organizers, attendees, and marketers identify appropriate events.

As the main responsibility of any public relations practitioner is to build the image of the organization by obtaining positive media coverage, exhibitions are great opportunities to achieve this goal. Public relations programme should be planned in such a way that a publicity campaign for each exhibition is included and deadlines for publications are met.

Trade fairs play an important role in marketing as well as business networking in market sectors that use them. People will look for meeting people and companies at their own level in the supply chain, as well as potential suppliers and potential buyers.

Generally, there will be a central trade show floor with booths where people exhibit their goods or services, and throughout the day there will be seminars for continuing education on matters relevant to the industry, like best practices, trends, and regulation. Besides, there will be some shared meals with keynote speakers, and social events in the evenings [2]. Booths range from simple tables to elaborate constructions.

Trade fairs often involve a considerable investment in time and money by participating companies [3]. The planning includes arranging meetings with other attendees beforehand and resources to follow up opportunities that are created at the fair. The costs include space rental, booth design and construction of trade show displays, telecommunications, travel, accommodations, promotional literature and items for giving out to attendants.

In addition, costs are incurred at the show for services such as electrical, booth cleaning, internet services, and drayage (also known as material handling). This local spending on logistics leads cities to promote trade shows as a means of local economic development, as well as providing opportunities for local businesses to grow, and attract new businesses to come [4, p. 86].

Exhibition activity is a powerful marketing and PR tool. In addition, the exhibition is a large local centre for the development of the industry, the spread of new products, services, information and technology. The venue of the exhibition is the center for economic development and prosperity of small and medium-sized business. Exhibiting creates the good reputation of the company. An exhibition would fail miserably if staff were not trained and if the objectives and benefits of the exhibition are not clearly explained to them. Therefore, professional election of trained staff is required.

Conclusion. To sum up, exhibition management plays one of the most important roles in the economic and social spheres of our life. At the same time, it is a reflection of the financial situation of the country and it is a factor that helps to improve it. Consequently, exhibitions are an integral part of the business environment and powerful tool of public relations.

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