

International Toy Fair

No Crisis for Toys

Nuremberg, February 2010 - 76,600 trade visitors from 104 countries came to the International Toy Fair in Nuremberg between 4 to the 9th of February, including 105 buyers from New Zealand. The 2,625 exhibitors, amongst them a small number of kiwis, were in a good mood despite icy weather conditions outside the fair grounds.

“Just one good contact makes it worth coming to Nuremberg”, says Denis Allais, director of Ezy Roller in Auckland. He has attended the Toy Fair as an exhibitor for the second time. The previous year he launched his invention, the Ezy Roller, which he describes as the “ultimate riding machine”. The roller, which comes in three sizes, is an award-winning toy in New Zealand and Allais hopes to attract more distributors from overseas while in Germany.

Andrew Baker, Managing director of IQ Ideas, Auckland, visits the Toy Fair for similar reasons, mainly to launch new products. He and his team have been travelling to Nuremberg frequently for the past three years. The products - games and puzzles in 20 different varieties - are designed and developed in New Zealand. The company, which has been growing ever since it was founded five years ago, is distributing in 12 countries. “Being present at the Toy Fair in Nuremberg not only gives us access to the German market”, says Baker, “but the whole world is meeting here.”

Statistics reveal that of the 40,561 visitors, the majority came from abroad, mainly from Europe, but also from Hong Kong (476), Australia (617), China (152), Taiwan (104), South Korea (496) and the United States (1,209).

Mark Stolten, Creative Director and CEO of Genesis Family Today, knows the Toy Fair by heart. He has been a frequent visitor over the years before he decided to launch the company’s innovative “tackle box” game and join as exhibitor this year. The company, founded in 2004, is committed to provide today’s families with fun, educational board games. The “tackle box” is about fishing quotas in New Zealand and is very appreciated by MAF, reveals Stolten. “It teaches a lot about New Zealand, our fishes and seashores and the environmental impact that overfishing has”, he goes on, however, the content of the game could be translated to anywhere in the world, he adds.

Stolten was one of the exhibitors, who had the chance to showcase product innovations in an area exclusively for first time exhibitors in hall 11 called the New Exhibitor Centre. He was quite happy about the location, as there was a continuous visitor flow through the very affordable stands of the newcomers.

Even old established Toy Giants such as Lego, Mattel, Playmobil or Ravensburger travel to Nuremberg to start their campaigns of new products. They also use the fair to introduce new market concepts as well as strengthen and improve existing business relationships.

“The importance of the International Toy Fair has grown continuously for Mattel,” said Peter Broegger, General Manager of Mattel GmbH. He and many companies found the optimism this year was in contrast to last year’s restrained ordering activity. 23.2 per cent of the exhibitors said that their customers were more interested in purchasing and ordering than the previous year when only 9.4 per cent registered an improvement.

A highlight of Mattel’s innovations was “Barbie Video Girl”, which will hit the stores in the second half of 2010. The popular model doll will carry a camera on her necklace and an LCD display on her back. Barbie fans from 5 years of age on will be able to see the world through “Barbie’s eyes”.

Dirk Engehausen, head of Lego Central Europe, was happy to announce an historic record in central Europe for Lego, which recorded growth of 14 per cent for 2009 in Germany. Hence the company has raised its market share in Germany from 11.5 to 14.5 percent. their business relationships

This years Toy Fair expanded its product portfolio by including baby articles. The companies that exhibited baby toys and articles in Baby’s World were delighted about the increased interest. There was also more interest in educational toys and books said to the fair organisers.

The six days of the fair showed a definite indication of a new beginning and the many adaptations of the contents of the fair were rated very positively.

The Toy Fair is not only a platform to introduce new products, industry experts from all over the world had the opportunity to exchange views and knowledge in various organized events such as the Global Toy Summit. The programme was divided in two parts, one for retailers and one for manufacturers. Retailers learned a lot about product presentation at the point of sale, price policy, assortment selection and marketing. The toy manufacturers were offered information on toy safety in Europe as well as safety requirements in the USA and China.

Social Media was a first for the Toy Fair. Infos and highlights of the fair were published over Twitter. The tweets on the Internet site at w.twitter.com/toyfair were providing impressions of the fair with photos, podcasts, films and product news.

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