

Analysis of perspective trends in trade fairs

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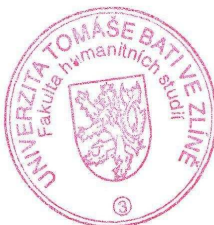
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ABSTRAKT

Cílem této bakalářské práce je analyzovat současný stav veletržnictví a navrhnout doporučení, která by dopomohla podnikům vystavovat úspěšněji. Teoretická část se zabývá aktuálními veletržními trendy a marketingovými činnostmi, nezbytnými pro úspěšnou účast na veletrhu. Analytická část se soustřeďuje na seznámení z výsledky provedeného dotazníkového šetření a následná SWOT analýza má za úkol charakterizovat silné a slabé stránky veletrhů. Na konci této práce jsou uvedeny návrhy na zlepšení, které by měly dopomoci k efektivnímu vystavování. Mezi klíčová doporučení patří zlepšení marketingových aktivit a přípravy na veletrh, účast na virtuálním veletrhu a využití nekonvenčního vystavování.

Klíčová slova: veletrh, virtuální veletrh, veletržní trendy, marketingové strategie, nekonvenční vystavování, komunikační mix

ABSTRACT

The aim of this Bachelor thesis is to analyze a current trade fairs situation and suggest improvements, which would help companies to exhibit more successfully. The theory explains the latest exhibition trends and marketing activities, which are essential for a successful participation at the trade fair. The analytical part concentrates on familiarizing with the results of questionnaire investigation and subsequently the SWOT analysis determines weak and strong sides of trade shows. At the end of this work are mentioned proposals for improvements, which would help companies to exhibit efficiently. The key recommendations include improvements in marketing activities and trade show preparation, participation at the virtual trade fair and the usage of the unconventional exhibiting.

Keywords: trade fair, virtual trade show, trade show trends, marketing strategies, unconventional exhibiting, communication mix

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INTRODUCTION

Companies are conscious of the fact that if they want to overcome strong competition pressure they will need to generate marketing activities and invest huge money to their promotion. Because of that marketing has become inseparable part not only in the companies' policies but also in our lives. We are used to see huge billboards along motorways, being disturbed by commercial spots in TV and radio, bombarded by advertising emails, pop ups and leaflets. Rise in the marketing strategies that should subjugate all of us is enormous. Invented tactics and increasing emphasis on the end users are called to deliver the companies' message to the broadest public attention.

The present time is characterized by a constant technological progress and face-to-face communication in doing business is not as needed as in the previous years. Nevertheless the traditional tools of marketing communications are still important and hold the same positions. Trade fairs are not exception and occupy a significant ranking in the communication mix. They are one of the oldest communication tools and have been regarded as an effective promotional tool since the beginning of their existence. On the other hand trade fairs are also affected by a technological progress both negatively and positively.

One of the major problems of the participation at the event is a necessity of huge financial resources. Due to that smaller companies can not afford the exhibiting so often. The main aim of today's exhibiting is not only an introduction of the innovations and news in a specific line of business but also image building and matter of prestige. If the companies participate at the trade fair they want to maximize their return of investment. Reaching the set aims is quite difficult and companies should use adequate marketing strategies, which would help them to exhibit successfully.

The accumulative trend in a usage of the Internet gains strength all over the world. More and more households and companies use this medium and the global network is becoming the zone where business resorts. News is not introduced at trade fairs as it was customary in the past but thanks to the Internet the public knows newsflashes and innovations in advance. Moreover the information presented at the Internet is accessible for a general public and not only for the trade fair participants. The position of trade fairs is weakened and that is why their future existence would be endangered.

Each of the above mentioned aspects led me to make a study that would appraise current trade fair situation. My Bachelor thesis was written with a view to informing about trade

show trends and marketing activities, which would help companies to promote them in a more effective way. The suggested recommendations and proposals for improvements are based on the secondary and primary research, which were done within the study. Although the presented bandwagons in my Bachelor thesis are not so usual in our country, I hope that my work will contribute not only to gaining theoretical knowledge but also help some company to exhibit in a more appropriate manner.

I. THEORY

1 TRADE SHOW AS A POWERFUL MARKETING TOOL

1.1 Definition of trade fair

Trade show is an organized event, where at the same time meet exhibitors with potential buyers. It is hold for a specific purpose and a character of the trade fair changes during the time. (Vysekalová et al. 2004, 16-22)

1.2 Trade fair history

The emergence of trade shows is dated to the distant past when people bought products on the open-air market on the occasion of Christian holidays or various social graces. At that time there was no massive communication. Therefore products were not advertised and sellers did not feel a need to boost the sale. In the 15th and 16th century the information was spread by written messages. Later the system of the postal service was used for spreading information. A massive communication was limited on account of a low cultural level of society and lack of freedom. The trade shows and exhibitions have been changed through the time from the primitive ones to the most demanding ones. This progress is attributed to the economical, scientific and cultural development. The major aim of trade show in the past was to sell and buy products. Companies exhibiting in today's trade fairs have much more extensive objectives. (Vysekalová et al. 2004, 17-19)

1.3 Trade fair objectives

The exhibitors should know their aims at the trade fair, so that organizers would offer them an adequate environment. There is a problem that exhibitors not always know the most important aims. Generally, if the company executives do not know three major aims of the company exhibiting they are not prepared to be exhibitors. The exhibitors' aims vary according to the company's field of business and character of the event. However, the most common objectives remain the same. (Vysekalová et al. 2004, 42-45)

1.3.1 Company most common objectives

- Presentation of the company
- Company image building
- Launching of the new product
- Gaining new customers and retaining current customers
- Increasing product consumption and brand awareness

- Make a contract
- Communication in B2B sector (Svoboda et al. 2002, 17,29,62-63)

1.3.2 Experts' aims

- To gain a survey about the situation on the market
- Familiarizing with innovations
- Looking for specific products and prices
- Analysis of competitors
- Making business
- To get new contacts
- Taking part in the vocational seminars or conferences

1.3.3 Aims of non-expert attendees

- Gaining experiences and having a fun
- To receive bonuses, presents, samples and other staff
- Comparing prices
- To buy or order products or services for a discount price
- Checking the premieres and news in a specific branch

1.3.4 Aims of media representatives

- An assemblage of materials about news on the market
- A personal meeting with marketing agents in order to advertising
- A participation at the press conferences, seminars and associated programs
- A possibility to contact VIPs more easily, if they visit the event
- Own image building and exchanging of contacts (Vysekalová et al. 2004, 60-64)

1.4 Trade show segmentation

Trade fairs can be divided into few groups according to various criteria.

1.4.1 Place of holding

- World: exhibitors and visitors from the whole world
- International: 20 % of a exhibition surface must be occupied by foreign exhibitors or 4% of the visitors must be foreigners
- National: take place in a one specific country

- Regional: a sphere of activity is from ten to fifty kilometers
- Local: it is earmarked for exhibitors and visitors from a specific locality
- Private: intended for a specific group of people (Vysekalová et al. 2004, 24-25)

1.4.2 Length of the show

- Long-term: the length of exhibiting lasts for months
- Medium-term: it lasts for one month maximum
- Short-term: a few days of exhibiting
- Presentations: it lasts several hours but maximum length is one day

1.4.3 Type of exhibition ground

- Stable exhibition grounds
- Portable exhibition grounds
- Provisional

1.4.4 Intention

- Highly professional
- Specialized
- According to branch
- Vendor
- Informative
- Educational
- Special-interest

1.4.5 Regularity

- Regular: trade show always takes place in the same period
- Irregular
- One-off (Galkaněvič et al. 1999, 9)

1.5 Role of the trade shows in marketing communications

‘Trade shows are a part of the marketing communications and one of the important tools of the communication mix.’ (Vysekalová et al. 2004, 38)

In purpose of a maximum impact of the exhibitor to the attendee, marketers turn to the broader concept of marketing communication and promotional strategy. This approach is

called integrated marketing communications (IMC) and includes media advertising, direct mail, personal selling, sales promotion, PR and sponsorship. (Kurtz and Boone 2006, 482) The role of trade shows in the communication mix is obvious but the place where should be these events put is unclear. The Belgian study places trade shows on the 4th position with no differentiation between companies that exhibit often, seldom or never. The results are given in the table below. (Vysekalová et al. 2004, 40)

Table 1 – A position of the trade fairs in the communication mix

Exhibiting companies		Not exhibiting companies	
Tool	Score (max. 5)	Tool	Score (max. 5)
1. Personal selling	4,09	1. Personal selling	3,51
2. Direct marketing	3,48	2. Direct marketing	3,13
3. Own activities	3,36	3. Own activities	2,99
4. Trade fairs	3,35	4. Trade fairs	2,83
5. PR	3,34	5. PR	2,82
6. Technical journals	3,19	6. Technical journals	2,23
7. Sponsorship	2,33	7. Sponsorship	2,03

Source: (Vysekalová et al. 2004, 40)

1.5.1 Communication benefit of the trade show

Trade show is a very important member of the communication mix for the sake of several facts. The most powerful one is a face-to-face contact, which is not replaceable by any other way of communication. The exhibitors but also the visitors have clearly advantageous position for a transaction of business because both sides attend the event with the aim of searching or providing information and expressing opinions. The show is set to the sharply defined location and time and the products can be presented in a real size and in the moment of their function. Thanks to that, the reaction of attendees can be seen and exhibitors can answer their questions and develop their ideas. Basically, exhibitors should meet the customer's needs and wants and be prepared to hold a dialog.

(Svoboda et al. 2002, 11-12)

1.6 Trade show budget

Determining trade show budget is one of the most difficult parts of preparation for the event. Firstly, they need to choose at which trade fair is their participation essential and at which not. Pouring money to the event where is not supposed sufficient feedback is wasting of funds. Exhibitors would be also aware of the risks connected with trade fair participation. Setting up objectives is a self evident part of the preparation for the event and companies should know what aims would be reached. Companies usually outline possible investments to the pie chart and predict which segment will need more money and which probably less. They ask question if the total revenue overmatch total costs. If not, participation at the trade fair would not be effective. Exhibitors calculate their total costs properly after the event and compare that with the total revenue. Then they ascertain if the participation at the event brought an adequate ROI. (BusinessEvolved.com)

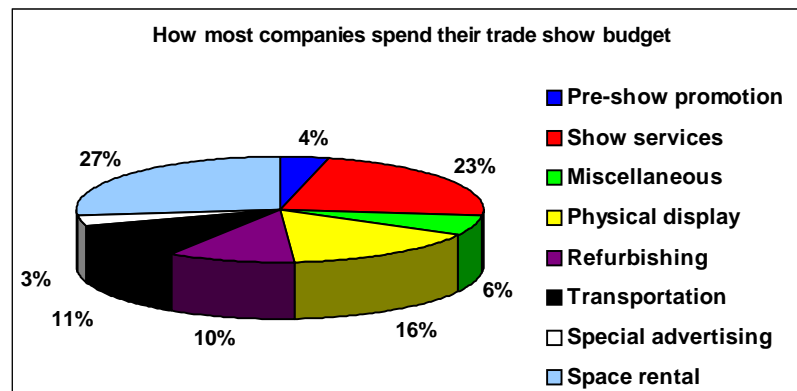


Figure 1 – How most companies spend their trade show budget

Source: (Adler Display)

2 SECONDARY RESEARCH – TRADE SHOW TRENDS

Basic features of trade fairs remain the same for the whole time of being. Verified marketing tools have had still their role in trade fairs. On the other hand, an uncontrollable progress brings new innovations, which help exhibitors to attract attendee's attention. Especially progress of information and communication technologies extends a sphere of activity. Furthermore, the exhibitors realize significance of being thrifty in the environment and use materials, which do not have an environmental impact.

2.1 Virtual trade shows

A rapid development in the Internet technologies caused that Internet takes a notable position in doing business. Owing to this progress, show organizers attempted to transfer trade fairs from the classical environment to the virtual one. In those days a virtual trade fair started to exist. (Svoboda et al. 2002, 6-7)

'It is defined as an online version of the event at which goods and services for a specific industry are exhibited and demonstrated.' (Whatis.com)

2.1.1 Costs expenditure

Virtual trade shows were devised mainly in purpose to reduce costs of exhibiting. The exhibitor, who decides to promote his services or products virtually, can save more than half of the costs when exhibiting in the physical event. Nevertheless it also depends on the number of attendees and number of exhibitors. *Jennefer Traeger, a spokesman of Unisfair*, which is a company providing online shows claimed that costs of clients like IBM and Nortel were less than total shipping costs for physical events held in the past. In addition to that, their booths visited more than 310 000 attendees. (Wagner 2007)

Another big companies focused on the exhibiting online and among them can be seen such trade names as Microsoft, AMD, Oracle or Dell. The attendance of the show, where these companies exhibited was more than 1 million unique visitors. No wonder that this kind of exhibiting becomes still more popular. According to *Tradeshow week magazine* mid to large sized companies spend more than \$550,000 every year for exhibiting. As opposed to the online exhibiting, where a company pays around \$20 a month plus expenditure for a virtual booth. Although online exhibiting is on increase, there is lack of organizations providing these types of events. (LaMotta 2007)

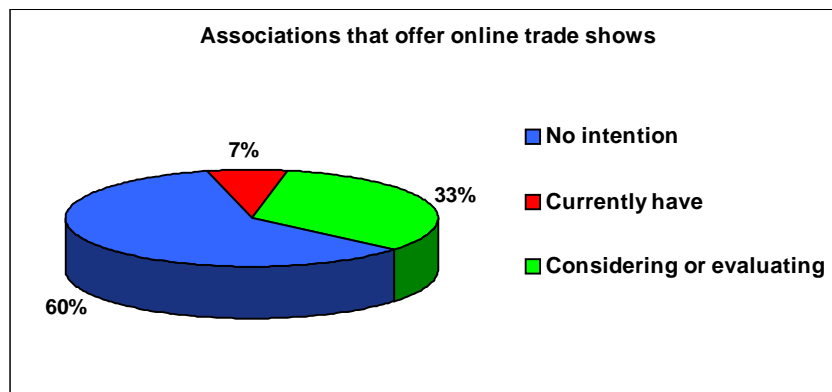


Figure 2 – Associations that offer online trade shows

Source: (Williams 2003)

2.1.2 Exhibiting period

Considering that classical exhibitions last approximately from 3 to maximum 5 days, they are at disadvantage in comparison with online exhibitions. Online exhibiting usually does not have any time lag to which the trade show is supposed to be done. The companies can promote their products and services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

2.1.3 Virtual trade show booth

Trade show booth is a heart of the company promotion. That is why exhibitor should give attention to its final appearance. For this purpose developers of trade show booths are available or most organizers of virtual exhibiting provides a specially designed software, in which the booth can be easily projected. Formats of exhibitions range from a basic directory of companies to the highly elaborated ones. At the present time 3D booths are more used because participants can feel like at the real event. The virtual booth has the same function as the real one. It is used for showing products and services, presenting product demos, and distributing literature. Attendees can view demos, collect literature and store it in the virtual briefcases. (Conventions.net)

The trade shows floor is usually divided into two parts. The first floor of event displays a layout of booths and their appearance in miniature. Clicking on a specific booth will allow the attendee to see the company's booth maximized. During the visit attendees can easily communicate with company representatives, ask them questions and collect information. Many booths also provide giveaways and prize competitions. Furthermore, the shows do not offer only communication between attendees and exhibitors but also between attendees

themselves. The communication is done via internal emails, instant messaging, exchanging virtual business cards or talking with Skype or ICQ. (Webmastercentral.co.uk under the heading “FREE Access to eComXpo”)

2.1.4 Communication within online trade show

A personal contact is the most appreciated feature of classical trade fairs. Online events do not offer communication directly but vicariously. Exhibitors can not read from the attendee’s posture, facial expression and other physical cues. They can only read the words and they are not able to recognize visitor’s feeling. Participants can ask questions and receive immediate responses through instant messaging. Online conferences and seminars are also held during the event. (Schwartz 2004; Friedmann 2007)

2.1.5 EComXpo, LLC – the first online tradeshow for ecommerce marketers

EcomXpo is an online virtual trade show designed especially for ecommerce marketers. The company was established with the aim of providing virtual space for exhibitors. Nowadays the company ranks among the most prominent companies in the online events. Among the customers can be seen such company names as Google or Dell. (Webmastercentral.co.uk under the heading “FREE Access to eComXpo”)

The last event was held on October 2007 and the statistics below speaks clearly. The online trade show get attention of nearly 150 exhibitors and more than 8,000 attendees. That is obvious that online exhibiting is on increase. For examples of the virtual booths see appendix PI. (EcomXpo.com under the heading ”eComXpo: October 2007 Show Statistics“)

Table 2 – EcomXpo: October 2007 show statistics

EComXpo: October 2007 show statistics	
8,123	Attendees
144	Exhibitor booths
153,619	Total booth visits
10,903	Show emails sent
90,533	Electronic business cards exchanged
15,807	In-show chats initiated
2,902	Presentations views

Source: (EcomXpo.com under the heading ”eComXpo: October 2007 Show Statistics“)

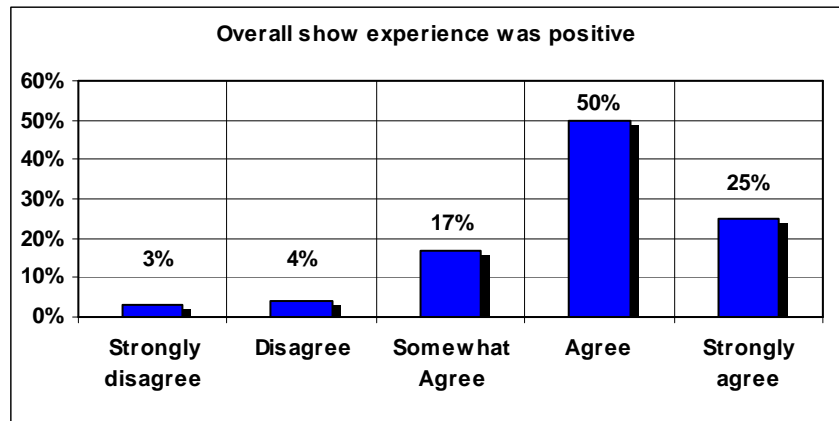


Figure 3 – Overall show experience

Source: (EcomXpo.com under the heading " eComXpo: October 2007 Survey Results")

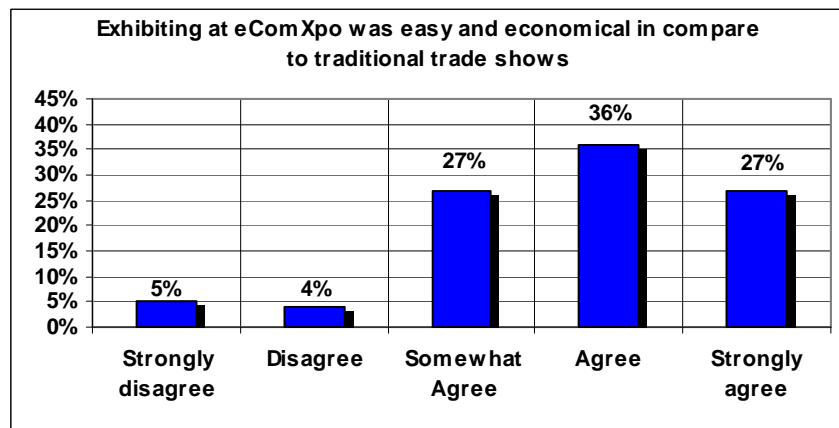


Figure 4 – Exhibiting at EcomXpo compare to traditional trade shows

Source: (EcomXpo.com under the heading " eComXpo: October 2007 Survey Results")

2.2 Environmental friendly trade shows

All of the media attention is around environmental disasters and global warming. Due to massive information campaigns about these issues, awareness of the environment protection is on increasing level among population. Still worse damage to environment has inclined people to consider possibilities to improve this situation. On account of that new environmental friendly materials have been developed and are used in various branches. Trade fairs are not an exception and environmental awareness is becoming a part of the modern exhibiting.

According to the *U.S. Environmental Protection Agency*, trade shows are the second most wasteful industry in the United States. Building industry is the first one. Due to these statistics and on demand of the exhibitors many convention centers are starting to be eco-friendly. Taking the 'green' approach to this business is not a cheap matter. On the other hand the exhibiting at the final stage will be more financially attractive for both exhibition centers and their customers. A lot of 'green' practices start to be implemented. Usage of paper and plastic belongs to past. Modern exhibition centers use china and linen instead of paper and plastic, they reduce, reuse and recycle resources and donate leftover food and beverage to charity. They also use more energy efficient lighting and are trying to run the show with a renewable energy. (Plummer 2007)

The implementation of 'green' processes takes a long time and not every exhibition center can afford a rapid jump on this bandwagon. The convention centers, which are designed, constructed and operated in the 'green' style, can be awarded by LEED certification program. The certificate is internationally accepted and it is very difficult to meet its strict criteria. A clear proof of a severity of the program acknowledges the fact that only 5 convention centers out of 417 in the U.S. have earned the LEED certificate. The others are in progress of attaining this certification. The Los Angeles convention center is one of the applicants for LEED certification. With a view to ranking among eco-friendly centers, great changes had to be implemented. The new recycling system, energy efficiency and food waste diversion were set up. (Plummer 2007)

2.2.1 Eco-friendly tradeshow display structures

Not only exhibition centers are aware of the environmental issues but also exhibitors take steps to be environmentally friendly. In view of 'green' thinking eco-friendly manufactured booths are becoming to be a part of modern exhibiting.

'Green' display structures are made from various materials including recyclable aluminum, bamboo plywood, organic cotton and paints, cork board and recycled PET bottles. Thanks to those materials structures are very ultra lightweight and can be easily moved. Furthermore, eco-friendly sustainable booth looks still professional and there is not marked difference that the structure is constructed in the 'green' style. There is also progress in using biodegradable banner stand graphics. Those are full color graphics printed on 100% recycled material. On top of that used ink is also organic. (Boothster.com)

2.2.2 ‘Green’ promotional products

Exhibitors avoid giveaways made of plastic and demand for other sources from which the presents would be made. Companies that use these kinds of giveaways demonstrate the attitude towards environment protection. Solar powered gadgets, recycled note pads, wooden pens or other non-plastic giveaways are great choices to attract attendee while keeping environmental impact to minimum.

Writing tools belong to the most common giveaways. The environmentally sensitive ones are refillable, made of wood, contain non-toxic ink and the company name is engraved there with laser. (Yokoyama 2007)

2.3 Unconventional exhibiting

2.3.1 Mobile marketing

Larger trade shows are usually run for several days and sometimes move to other cities. That means that costs are higher because everything has to be relocated in a short-term perspective. With demand to be flexible and prepare for traveling among exhibition centers, the most dynamic trade show innovation is more frequently used. It is a vehicle, which is exhibition booth on wheels at the same time. Vehicles range from minivans to semi-trailers and are totally customized according to exhibitors’ demands. They are also equipped with the audio-visual techniques and other hi-tech technologies. Decorating plus leasing of the vehicle costs from \$6,000 in the United States. Supposing that the campaign lasts for a year the price can climb to \$1 million. Even though investment in a mobile marketing is quite high the customer demand is on increase. (Barr 2003)

2.3.2 Trade shows by invitation

Another trend is on the rise in the trade show industry. A national research by *Exhibit Surveys Incorporated* found that 71% of trade fair attendees across all industries also attend approximately three private shows annually. This kind of trade fair is regarded as a meeting of storeowners of the same chain rather than traditional event for exhibitors from the same industry. The main purposes of the event are perusing merchant products and networking with other participants. (Barr 2003)

2.3.3 Outdoor tradeshow

Outdoor events are gaining in popularity in the trade show industry. They are usually set in locations with stable or predictable climates, so that exhibitors would adequately prepare for the event. In respect of unpredictable weather conditions exhibitors usually use trade show display tents. They are not only used as a protection from external influences but also for defining the exhibition space. Additional walls can be easily added to evoke impression of a classical indoor display booth. Without respect to possible problems with weather, outdoor trade shows are regarded as more business-friendly environment. Exhibitor and also attendees feel more relaxed and are prepared to do business in a more comfortable way. (Trade show marketing blog, comment posted February 26, 2008)

2.3.4 Small and regional trade shows

Bigger shows are a bit shaken due to the fact that smaller shows and events on a regional level gain in popularity. People are interested in more focused events. They do not seek for massive shows that dominate the scene. Smaller shows with well plan agendas are becoming the main objective of participants. (Rodriguez 2003)

A smaller company, which can not afford a huge booth at the bigger event, would consider its participation carefully. There are too much exhibitors at the events of great caliber and convention floor is usually overcrowded. In other words the small trade show booth can be easily overlooked because at big events dominate booths made in a grand style. For a smaller type of organization is such kind of exhibiting almost meaningless. (Allbusiness.com)

The smaller companies usually want to exhibit at the national level, at the big shows, which are well known in the industry but it is really a tall order to be noticed, especially if you are unknown and with no established reputation. It is generally known that regional trade shows are not so popular and the participation is a little limp. On the other hand there participate usually regional marketers so the survey of the major players in the industry on the regional level can be noticed. If the unknown marketer exhibits at the regional show it is common that the intensive attention is given to him. Everyone is interested in products or services provided just because of the fact that the company is unknown at the regional level. Another advantage is that small, regional marketer often operates only in one specific area because national market is too large for him. That means that attendees of a regional show identify the company as their potential provider of products and services because they

are not interested in companies of the national character. Additionally local trade shows are usually much cheaper than the national ones and the participation of the smaller companies can lead in their effective marketing strategy, which can not be replaced by anything else. (Todrin 2008)

2.3.5 Trade shows consolidation

Consolidations have reduced the number of different companies in the industry to the several ones, which operates on the market. Consolidation executives need to understand their fundamental economic structure and objectives that company serves. Due to mergers new methods in various departments can be established and association executives would not be able to operate on the revenue assumptions from the previous years. Consolidating companies leads trade show organizers to innovate and reinvent themselves in order to their survival. (Friedman 2003)

2.3.6 Experiential exhibiting

Experiential exhibiting is another growing trend. There is no need to hard-selling products nowadays. Exhibitors are not focused on differentiation of their products from the other providers. They are more interested in evocating a really positive impression on the attendees. Promotion staff is more regarded as effective soft-sell consultants and their aim is to engage visitors with a solved problem. This type of exhibiting leaves impression of a nonviolent sale that is much more popular than the standard selling practices. In fact the customer has a memorable experience and associates the product with the company that presents in this professional manner. Features such as interactive computer games testing the knowledge based on the famous television game shows have a beneficial effect. It makes the company booth more interactive and lures potential customers. (Kelly 2006; Trade-Show-Advisor.com under the heading “Exhibiting Trends Will Impact Your Trade Show Display Booth”)

2.3.7 Hotel suite vs. exhibition center

Some exhibitions that last for a few days are often held both in exhibition centers and in hotel suites. The practice can be seen subsequently. For instance two-day trade show is divided into two sections. The former day of the event is held in a hotel suite, the latter one in an exhibition center. Exhibiting in a hotel showroom does not affect the trade show budget so much. It is usually cheaper than exhibiting in a convention hall. Besides that the

distinctions between small and large companies are usually deleted. As a result the smaller ones can feel the advantage of being on the same position in doing business. They do not need to compete with the exhibition leaders, which can afford large and modern expositions. (Serafini 2002)

Another positive feature of hotel exhibiting is that everything is under one roof. When people get up from their beds, they just awake at the event. They do not need to travel long distances to exhibition center and waste time by it, moreover straying somewhere is also eliminated. On the other hand show organizers would be ensured that no other event is held at the hotel suite at the same time. Some large hotels have more convention halls but the smaller ones offer only one hotel suite, where two events would be held only under difficult conditions. However booths are smaller sized due to the confined space, moving in and out of a hotel takes a longer time that in case of an exhibition center. Hotels have typically limited loading dock facilities without direct access to the exhibition hall. It means that equipment and other staff essential for exhibiting have to be transported in a more complicated way. In view of catering services are hotels also in advantage. Even though exhibition centers improved in this respect, hotels are still on a higher level. (Tesar 1994)

2.4 Convention center technologies

Technology is becoming more important for exhibitors and its position in offered facilities is still on increase. Exhibitors are aware of the fact that they need to keep in step with upcoming technologies and convention centers have to invest in those facilities to meet the customers' expectations. Exhibitors and attendees are mainly focused on data capacity. They are expected to be able to receive and send data very quickly. (Sherman 2006)

2.4.1 Wi-Fi coverage

Wireless Internet access took position of the indispensable tool for communication at trade fairs. The precursors of the wired Internet access fall from glory and wireless goes to the forefront. High-speed wireless connection can transmit data at speeds of up to 11 Megabit per second but fiber-optic cables are the needs, which afford this connection. In that 1 Gigabit connections are becoming quite common. The wireless connection can be separated to different sectors. Owing to that welcome screens and messages can be displayed differently according to room, which the participant occupies. Undoubtedly other benefit of wireless connection is a rapid access to information, which is really important

during the seminars and presentations. It allows exhibitors to access online materials very quickly and attendees are not disgusted by a slow connection. It is also common that the fees for wireless connection are not exacted from attendees as it was in the past because nowadays the wireless connection is regarded as a commonplace. (Sherman 2006)

2.4.2 Digital conference program

People who attend trade shows usually bring too many printed prospects, which are then littered. The way to avoid this prodigality is to provide company brochures not in classical printed form but through digital conference program. The attendees who are interested in company products, services or whatever else can download this information onto handheld devices throughout infrared touch-screen kiosks. These are usually installed in a registration area. The offered information can include schedules, session descriptions and locations; show floor plans and much more. The main advantage of the system is accessing information in a faster and more convenient way. (Ross 2005)

2.4.3 Security and surveillance equipment

Site security is an inherent part of the modern convention halls. There are installed security systems but also schemes, which ensure that a fast response will be done in case of emergency. In this case the emergency responders are allowed to view a complete site of the convention hall and detailed information about the building. Such equipment as biometric readers, card key access and camera surveillance are really common. For instance Overland Park Convention Center in Kansas belongs to the users of such equipment. Every door there is equipped with a proximity card reader. Moreover 36 cameras monitor and also record all rooms. (Sherman 2006)

3 GROWTH IN TRADE SHOW MARKETING STRATEGIES

Well-prepared promotional techniques are essential for a successful participation at trade fairs. If the company underestimates marketing strategies connected with trade fair participation then full return of investment can not be expected. Exhibitors are aware of positive effects of marketing strategies and they use them in a big amount. Continuing shift from traditional media to new ones forces exhibitors to familiarize with new methods and use them as effectively as it is possible.

3.1.1 Pre, at and post show marketing

Successful trade fair results depend not only on exhibiting. The exhibitor should be familiar with the marketing strategies, which are done before, during and after the event.

- Pre-show marketing

Last moment decisions and missed deadlines should be avoided because those affect trade show budget dramatically. Exhibitors should know their goals and should be prepared for the event in all aspects. Trade show budget planning gives perception of total exhibit costs and their specific allocation. (Castle)

Primary goal before trade show is to inform potential attendees that a company will be present at the event. They should know where the booth will be placed and why should invest time visiting the exposition. Among traditional pre-show marketing tools belong company websites, direct mails or personalized letters. Other tools are also possible but less effective.

- At-show marketing

Collecting contacts is an important part of exhibiting. If the exhibitor meets someone who would be ranked among high-potential customers, then an electronic address should be added to the email-distribution list. It allows exhibitors to use these contacts later in purpose of sending newsletters, invitations and other staff.

A company message is not distributed only by the catalogues or other printed materials. Exhibitors use more promotional CDs, which are nowadays also cost-effective. CDs are usually printed with a company name and logo and contain digital brochures, virtual product demonstration, technical specifications or other information, which can be easily reached anytime.

Exhibitors should use web cameras in their booth for people who have no possibility to attend the trade show. This equipment allows Internet users to see the product lunch or

demonstration that are held in a company booth during the event. Registering into various company contests or drawings is also very beneficial.

Attendees of company websites should find daily updated information like event news, workshop recapitulations, speaker summaries and other staff. Thanks to that, conference attendees and people who were not present would have a notion about the company participation at the trade show.

- Post-show marketing

Within a week after the event the main leads should be contacted by either handwritten note or by a personal call. The others less prospective buyers should be informed by an email or through the company websites. It reminds them that they visit a company booth and they recollect that they were attracted by something. The letter for high-prospective buyers should be brief and includes information like company's website, contacts on local sales representatives and other details which would prospects need for making a purchase decision. Customer care and individualized approach is a key to be positively regarded by all attendees who were contacted within follow-up activities.

(Trade-Show-Advisor.com under the heading "Utilize Web Marketing for Your Trade Show Promotion"; Heuvel 2003)

3.1.2 Websites and emails

Websites such a cost-effective promotional tool are becoming more common. Their purpose is to inform about various trade fairs, their orientation and location. Websites are also used for offering giveaways. Attendees who register at the trade show in advance can win free tickets. Another online approach is a usage of email newsletters that inform prospective exhibitors about forthcoming event. It is easy, quick and cheap way to attract attendees and exhibitors. These emails also include information about registration process, offered services or attractions, which are available in a trade fair location.

Email marketing campaigns are segmented according to recipients. Show organizers send targeted emails to prior attendees and more comprehensive messages to the potential attendees. Email formats can differ but usually contain text, links to the websites or both of them. (Kirkwood 2007)

According to the annual report of *Expoweb.com* top email marketing difficulties in 2006 were:

Finding reliable e-lists, high block-rate due to Spam blockers, high bounce-back due to bad addresses, identifying the best messages, copy or design approach, managing in-house e-lists, dealing with attendees' ill-will toward Spam, tracking response, identifying the best days and times to transmit blasts, finding reliable e-mail service vendors and testing email campaigns. (Kirkwood 2007)

3.1.3 Relationship marketing

Emails and also direct mails are undoubtedly effective ways to contact existing exhibitors and attendees. On the other hand there should be given attention to the message and recipients needs. That is why show organizers should know as much demographic information about them as it is possible and put them into mailing lists or databases. For instance The International Consumer Electronic Show has a database which includes thousands of exhibitors and hundred thousands of visitors. The database is updated regularly by sending emails to everyone who participated at the event previous year with a request to add or confirm information. Exhibitors receive email newsletter every month plus two direct mails every year. Attendees receive messages in a category in which they express their interest and also direct mails containing brochure and postcard. Moreover registration for them is absolutely free of charge and it should attract them enough to visit the event again. Among the most popular relationship marketing offers belong education opportunities, co-located trade fairs, free meeting space for buying teams, coupons for show specials, free lodging for VIPs and many others. (Kirkwood 2007; Collins 2004)

3.1.4 Telemarketing

Telemarketing is another tool, which can intensify interest of attendees. The operators have database of possible exhibitors that would be attracted to a specific event. The database program uses industrial classification codes, location, and number of employees and sales revenue to get a preliminary exhibitor survey. After creating the list, the work belongs to call operators. They call to all companies at the list, inform them about the event a try to persuade them to visit it. (Grossfield 2004)

3.1.5 Direct mails

Emails use everyone who has Internet connection and for the sake of unpopular junk emails people use Spam filters. That is why email response rates decline dramatically. On account of that, email marketing is becoming not as much effective as the traditional direct emails. It means that the traditional method is on the upswing again and marketers adjust their budgets to this trend. On the one hand massive email campaigns have been used in a high volume but on the other hand exhibitors have kept a habit of direct mails and printed forms of advertising. *Shomex Productions*, which organize more than 30 career fairs, realized research, in which customer responses to various advertising methods were observed. By virtue of the research they switched from email campaigns to traditional direct emails. According to the company, direct mail has the best ROI and it is most effective advertising tool for exhibitors. On the other hand additional methods are also essential and are still used but in less quantity. Shomex also tries other methods of direct mails, which would increase customer awareness. Small or big postcards would increase attention but the results of these techniques have not known yet. Typical direct mails usually contain information about the event and destination and urge people to register. Sometimes discounts on various services are also enclosed. (Collins 2004)

3.1.6 Onscreen advertising

Cinemas operators are busy with finding new advertisers, which would present their advertising spots before showing film. Exhibitors accept that as new challenge to promote them effectively. The advantage of the cinema advertising is obvious. Audience wants to see a film but firstly advertising spots are showed. They do not have a remote control to switch it off or turn to another channel like in a case of the TV commercials. Moreover exhibitors can deliver their message to the more targeted audience. With respect to the exhibitors' costs on this type of advertising, cinema operators install digital cinema networks, which allow delivering ads without converting to expensive 35 mm film. Owing to that advertising costs are reduced to minimum. (Sperling 2002)

3.1.7 Search engine marketing strategy

Being searched with the most popular search engines and be ranked among the first three hyperlinks means that company invests a great sum of money in the e-marketing. Not only reference to the company website is included but if company pays search engines they can add company advertisements along with the search results. The basic of the searching are

keywords. Who pays more for a specific keyword, that one will be ranked in higher position on the list. The company pays per click (PPC) and that is why main objective is to set appropriate keywords. PPC campaigns can be run in a proper way if the searched words by website attendees are also used as keywords for the company website. PPC campaigns may be suitable for smaller low-price point shows, which are held in different cities. When people search for the event they must click on the ad to get the information about dates and directions. In case that the event finished and moved to another city, keywords can be changed to other ones that are related to the forthcoming show. (Chatfield-Taylor 2007)

3.1.8 Online advertising

Online advertising means that the company displays their advertisement somewhere on Internet. Publishers observe how many times the advertisement is showed and how many times someone clicks on it. Clicking on that usually means redirection to home page of the company. Then the visitor can be tracked and company gets the information, which section of their website attracts visitors the most. According to that the company can concentrate on improvements or just evaluate visitors' attendance. Trade shows which are advertised online can gain more attention and clicking on ad usually leads visitor to a pre-registration process. (Chatfield-Taylor 2007)

3.1.9 Media packaging

Telling the same stories and using the same phrases about the company, their products and offered services can result in minimizing exhibit results. That is why investment in media packaging is essential because visitors have a clue about the offered products in advance. One of the most powerful approaches of maximizing trade show performance is to use spots in various media, which would run before, at and after the show. Media package usually includes radio, video and TV spots. These short spots can significantly increase product awareness, drive traffic to the booth and increase overall trade show revenue. Media package consists of one-minute introductory spot, which is followed by six to eight minute educational spot. Of course that in this case it is more suitable for video spots rather than for TV commercial. Because the commercial times are pretty expensive, classical commercial length is not more than one minute. The most effective timing for TV commercial is one or two weeks before trade show. The spot can be broadcasted in the regional or national TV. Even if the prospects do not plan to visit an event, they know that the company, which promotes itself in TV ranks among big player in the industry. Media

package is definitely more expensive method of promotion. On the other hand there are package options available, which do not affect trade show budget so dramatically.

(Trade-Show-Advisors.com under the heading “Media Packages Deliver Impressive Trade Show Exhibit Results”)

4 SUMMARY OF THE THEORETICAL PART

On basis of the secondary research trade shows are a significant part of the marketing communications. Role of trade fairs is essential, on the other hand new technologies and changing approach of promotion exert influence on trade shows position in the communication mix. Especially small companies do not have financial resources to participate at trade fairs. They can not afford huge booths and marketing campaigns. The only way to participate physically is to exhibit at the small and regional events. For many companies it is unsatisfactory, and therefore they are trying to use another type of exhibiting. Bandwagon of today's exhibiting is an online trade show. It works in the same way like a classical trade fair but the usage of a virtual version saves a lot of money. Not only smaller companies use this new type of exhibiting but also international companies use it such a new marketing strategy. However classical promotional strategies remain the same, Internet marketing and everything related to that is becoming to play a significant role in trade show promotion. Online advertising, websites or email campaigns are becoming essential because they have a tractable character and they can be quickly modified according to the company decisions. The secondary research also contains information about trends from the perspective of exhibition centers that have to comply with exhibitors' wants and needs.

The practical part of the thesis will be focused on the evaluation of a current trade fair situation through the questionnaire processing and SWOT analysis. At the conclusion the proposals improvements in the trade fair industry will be introduced.

II. ANALYSIS

5 ANALYSIS OF TRADE FAIRS

Trade fairs have an important position in the communication mix and therefore it is highly improbable that they will be moved aside. Although today's trade fair situation is relatively stable it does not mean that others media, which attack a better post in the communication mix may not endanger their position. The companies, which do not deal with the new marketing strategies and trends that occur nowadays, have a minimal possibility to exhibit in a proper manner.

Below are stated four points that were also mentioned in the theoretical part and which are essential for analyzing trade fair situation by the primary research.

- **Setting objectives and creating the budget**

Setting objectives and creating trade show budget are the most important parts of the preparation for the exhibiting. If the company does not set the objectives properly, there is no certainty that the exhibiting will be effective. Trade show staff will be probably unsure about their aims and they will not behave in the manner, which would be essential. Whether the objectives are set incorrectly, return of investment is usually against all odds. Each company that considers participating at the event should know the sum of the money, which is willing to invest in the exhibiting. Creating the trade show budget is a very difficult part of the preparation and companies usually use pie charts, which divide into several parts according to expenditure of financial resources on a specific field. The companies also compare total costs with the total revenue. Incorrect exhibiting means that the adequate ROI is not reached.

- **Online trade shows**

Online trade shows would be conceded such a type of unconventional exhibiting but use of global network and virtual tools is too large topic that should be detached. Exhibiting online began in the USA and gain in popularity all over the world in accordance with a boom in the Internet technologies. Virtual trade shows are not as usual as classical trade fairs but include lots of advantages. Firstly these events are far cheaper and it is a major factor, which influences potential exhibitors to participate there. Moreover online exhibiting is not time limited and can lasts for months.

- **Unconventional exhibiting**

People demand for innovations in all spheres of their lives. Trade fairs organizers and also exhibitors have to cope with trends and always try something new to attract attendees' attention. For instance the exhibiting at smaller trade shows is new bandwagon among

exhibitors. 'Big players' occupy large events and smaller ones have a small possibility to tower above them. The minor events are not so overcrowded by attendees and exhibitors but the company booths are visible properly and there is a bigger chance to attract attendees. A mobile marketing is another way of unconventional exhibiting which gains in popularity. Booth on the wheels, which can be easily moved to another event without any complicated tacking, is not suited for each exhibitor but that ones who exhibit very often would certainly appreciate it.

- **Marketing strategies**

Company's participation at the trade fair would not be successful without using appropriate marketing strategies. Nevertheless companies underestimate the importance of marketing before and after the events and they mainly focus on marketing strategies, which are exploited during the trade fair. Trade show marketing is more or less done by tools of the Internet marketing. Emails, company websites or online advertising are used in an increased number because these methods of promotion are fast and cheap at the same time. The traditional methods like direct mails, TV commercials and others are also used but on a smaller scale.

6 PRIMARY RESEARCH AND SWOT ANALYSIS

The realization of the primary research was done with the aim to determine whether the trade fairs are still regarded such a powerful marketing tool. Subsequently SWOT analysis was done in order to defining strong and weak points of trade fairs. Obtained information creates background for the proposals for improvements.

6.1 Goal of the primary research

The aim of the primary research was determined in advance. My aim of the research was to determine, whether the trade shows are still a popular marketing tool for a company promotion. With respect to the aim, the several hypotheses were formulated. By means of results from questionnaires these hypotheses will be verified or invalidated.

- **1st hypothesis** – Exhibiting at the trade fairs is less attractive thanks to still increasing total costs.
- **2nd hypothesis** – Most of asked companies have a company website and invest in Internet marketing.
- **3rd hypothesis** – At least 40 % of the respondents will claim that Internet supersedes trade fair in near future.

6.2 Methodology of the research

- **Data collecting**

The data were collected directly from the exhibitors at the GO and RegionTour trade fair, which took place in Brno from 10th January to 13th January 2008. The marketing research was realized on 11th January 2008. Interviewing was proceeded in the part of the trade fair, where travel agencies were presented. Totally were responded 45 exhibitors but only 40 questionnaires are fully acceptable because some were not completely finished. The way of the interviewing was changing from booth to booth. Some company representatives liked to be questioned; others said that they fill it themselves. Before the questioning the introductory speech was done. The aim of that was to familiarize the respondents with the purpose of questioning and ensure them that the company information will be used only for the Bachelor thesis. Respondents were chosen in random but only real company representatives were acceptable for filling the questionnaire. Incompetent authorities like promotional staff were not questioned because the information would be distorted. All participants of the research were questioned in the Czech language.

- **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire consists of ten different questions. A headline of the questionnaire is provided with the place for a company name, which was interviewed. The first question is informative determining whether the company is domestic or international. Other questions are focused on the companies' attitude towards the trade shows. Five questions have four possibilities to answer, four questions two possibilities and finally one question with seven possibilities to answer. The total time for filling takes not more than two minutes.

- **List of respondents**

Table 3 – List of respondents

List of respondents	
FLORA TOUR & TRAVEL	HOLIDAY BRNO, Ltd.
TRAVEL 2002, Ltd.	CK Livingstone, Ltd.
EMMA Agency, Ltd.	FIRO-tour, Inc.
LADISLAV CACEK CK KO-Tour	Alpi Center, d.o.o.
CK AKVILA TRAVEL, Ltd.	CK TURISTIKA a HORY, Ltd.
CK JUHÁSZ, Inc.	RELAX ADRIATIC, Ltd.
CK KONTAKT MORAVIA	Marco Polo International
GLOBTOUR GROUP, Ltd.	CK ESO TRAVEL, Ltd.
AMERICA TOURS	A.S.T.I., d.o.o.
VÍTKOVICE TOURS, Ltd	ATIS, Ltd.
CK Victoria	CHINA TOURS, Ltd.
INTACT, Ltd.	Periscope Skandinávie, Ltd.
CK Hellas Tour, Ltd.	CK ERBIA
INDIA TOURISM	BRENNA, Ltd.
CK MILE	BULGARIATOUR, Ltd.
DAN TOUR, Ltd.	DAMA, Ltd.
SÜDTIROL	SHENKO"S, Ltd.
Tuniský národní úřad pro cestovní ruch	CK S.E.N., Ltd.
DINOPARK CZECH REPUBLIC	ITA (Incentive Travel Agency)
Jockey Club Malý Pěčín	Paradiso, Ltd.

6.3 Questionnaire Evaluation

Only 40 questionnaires from 45 were correctly completed. The data were collected and analytically processed by the graphic method.

- **Question No. 1 – ‘To what type of the business does your company belong?’**

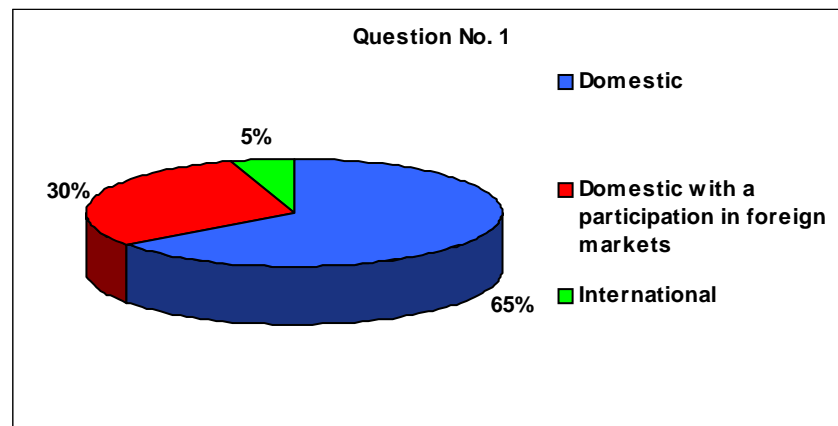


Figure 5 – To what type of the business does your company belong?

This question has an informative character. From the 40 responded companies were 65% domestic, 30% domestic with a participation in foreign markets and 5% international. It shows that major share at the trade fair had domestic companies and participation of the international ones was almost exception. On the other hand the fact that almost all respondents were domestic-based companies is beneficial because proposals for improvements should be applicable to the Czech trade fair situation.

- **Question No. 2 – ‘Do you participate in trade fairs regularly?’**

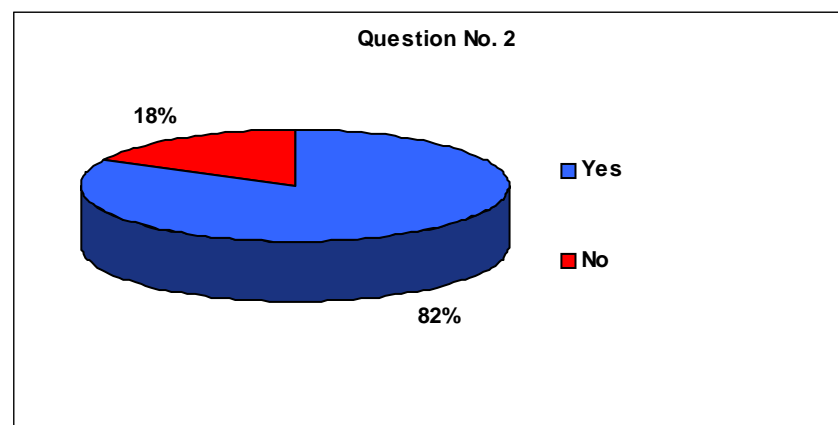


Figure 6 – Do you participate in trade fair regularly?

The aim of this question was to determine whether the companies exhibit regularly or irregularly. Only 18 % of the respondents exhibit irregularly. However the reasons for not exhibiting were not a part of the question, respondents reacted immediately. As they claimed the main reasons for not exhibiting are lack of financial resources and long distance from the company headquarters to exhibition centers.

- **Question No. 3 – ‘What are your major objectives at the trade fair?’**

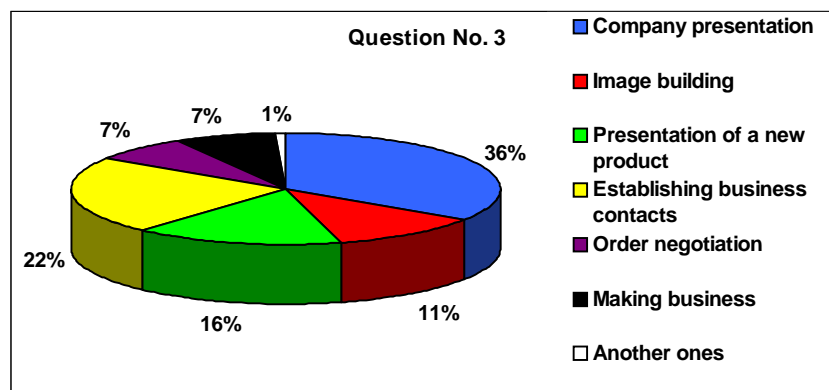


Figure 7 – What are your major objectives at the trade fair?

This question was one of the most difficult. When the companies' representatives were asked, several of them were not sure about the main objectives of their company. Their reactions were surprising and it is evident that pre-show marketing is sometimes neglected. The results speak clearly and support current trade show trend. 47 % of the companies choose company presentation and image building such their major company objectives. It means that exhibiting at the trade fair is a question of prestige.

- **Question No. 4 – ‘Are you satisfied with a composition of attendees?’ (With a view to their qualification)**

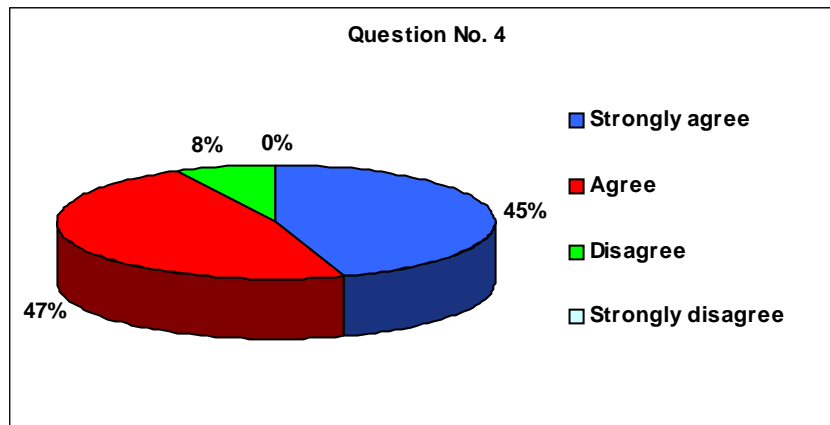


Figure 8 – Are you satisfied with a composition of attendees?

The low level of attendees is past as many exhibitors claimed. 92 % of the respondents are satisfied with a composition of attendees. 45 % of them are extremely satisfied. The respondents said that the visitors are more attracted to the provided services than to giveaways. 8% of the respondents do not agree with that statement and claim that main purpose of the visiting trade fair are still giveaways and associated program with competitions. One of them also said that exhibiting in the Western Europe is on a higher level and attendees there behave in a more polite manner.

- **Question No. 5 – ‘Do you regard trade fair as an efficient tool of the marketing communications?’**

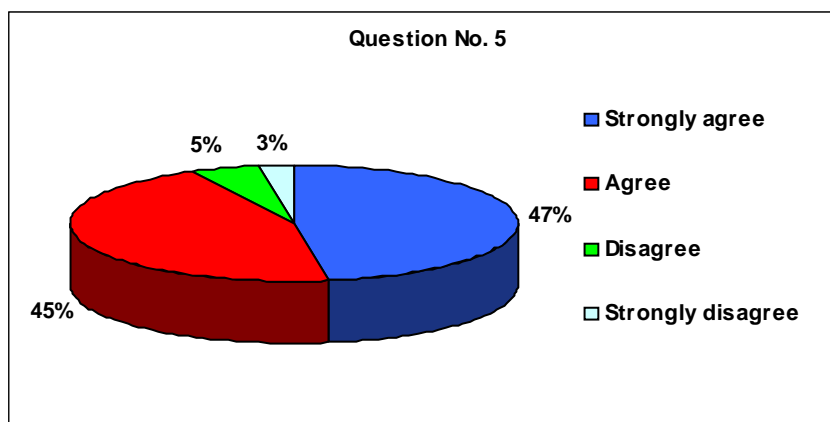


Figure 9 – Do you regard trade fair as an efficient tool of the marketing communications?

On basis of the research, trade fairs are regarded as an efficient marketing tool. 47 % of the respondents strongly agree and 45% agree. 8% of the respondents evaluate trade fairs as inefficient and claimed that if the company wants to be seen at the market, participation is the necessity.

- **Question No. 6 – ‘Is your active participation at the trade fair still attractive with a view to the total financial costs?’**

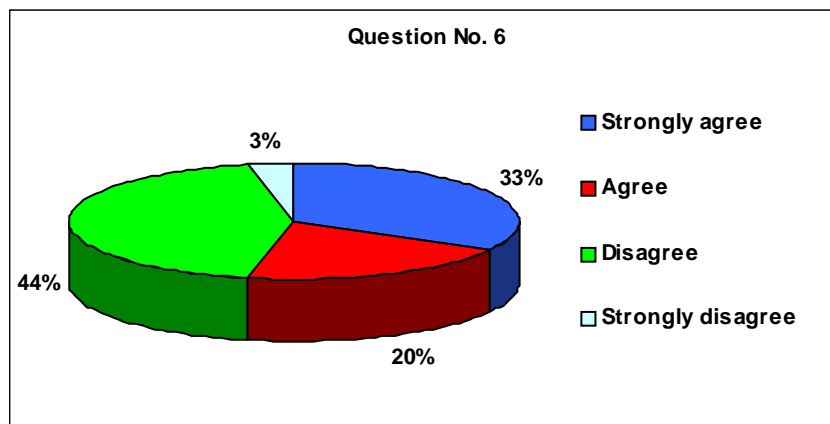


Figure 10 – Is your active participation at the trade fair still attractive with a view to the total financial costs?

Nearly half of the respondents considered trade fairs as too expensive way of promotion. Their costs are too high and participation at the trade fair affects their budget dramatically. Therefore not every company can afford exhibiting and has to use other marketing tools that do not have to be so effective. On the other hand 53 % of the companies were satisfied with the total financial costs. The satisfaction with the total costs depends on the size of the company. Bigger ones can afford exhibiting several times a year because they have enough financial resources for that.

- **Question No. 7 – ‘Do you regard Internet as a reliable tool for a company presentation?’**

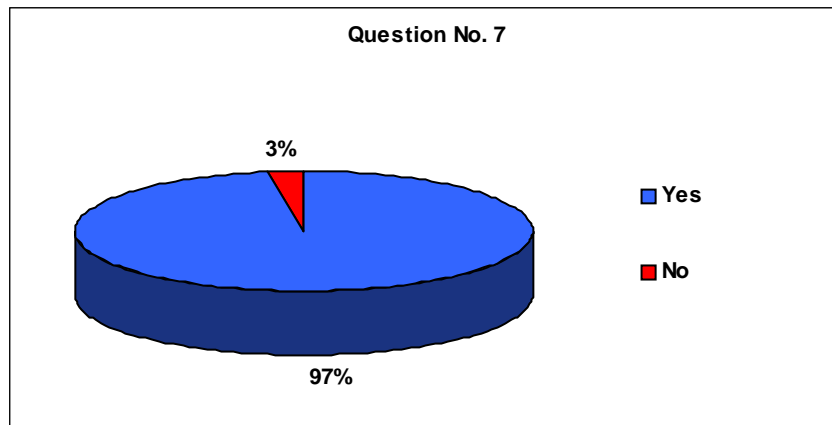


Figure 11 – Do you regard Internet as a reliable tool for a company presentation?

97 % of the exhibitors fancy that Internet can propagate the company in a proper manner. Only one company representative thinks in another way. He said that some of the company websites do not work as it is supposed and he is not satisfied with their updating. Altogether Internet is regarded as a very powerful promotional tool and it will be probably still acquiring importance.

- **Question No. 8 – ‘Does your company own website and invest in Internet marketing?’**

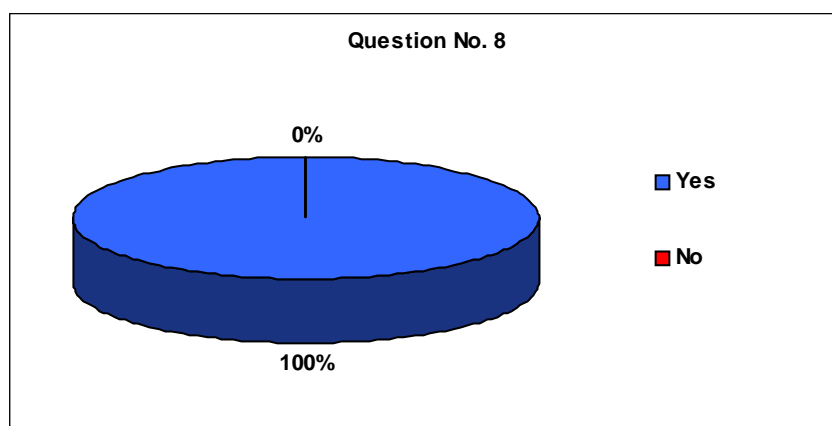


Figure 12 – Does your company own website and invest in Internet marketing?

All participants answered in the same way. Investing in Internet marketing and having a company website is a commonplace. If they were asked a few years ago their answers

would be probably different. Nowadays Internet marketing is a great business where many companies allocate large share of their marketing budgets. On the other hand if they were asked which Internet marketing strategies they use, they only mentioned websites and occasionally advertising emails.

- **Question No. 9 – ‘Are you aware of the fact that also online trade shows do exist?’**

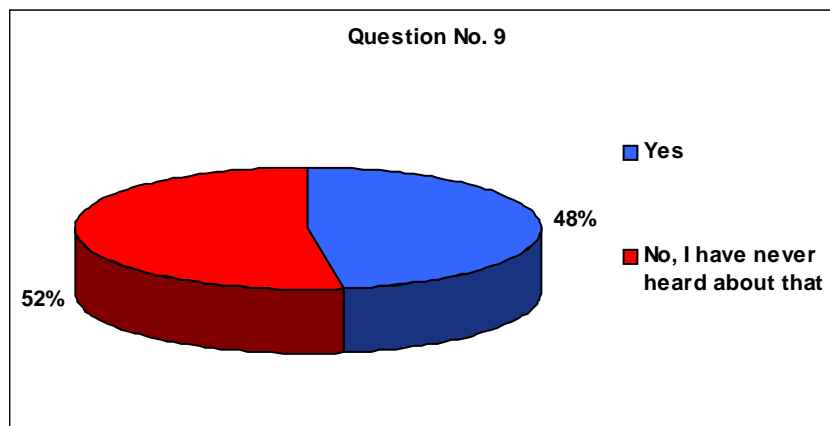


Figure 13 – Are you aware of the fact that also online trade shows do exist?

Surprisingly online trade shows are not as popular in the Czech Republic as in the USA and Western Europe. More than half of the company representatives have never heard about online exhibiting. The others know that something like that exists but they have never been participants. That is a pity that especially domestic companies do not have opportunity to exhibit online because here is not any provider of these events.

- **Question No. 10 – ‘Do you think that Internet will supersede trade fairs in future?’**

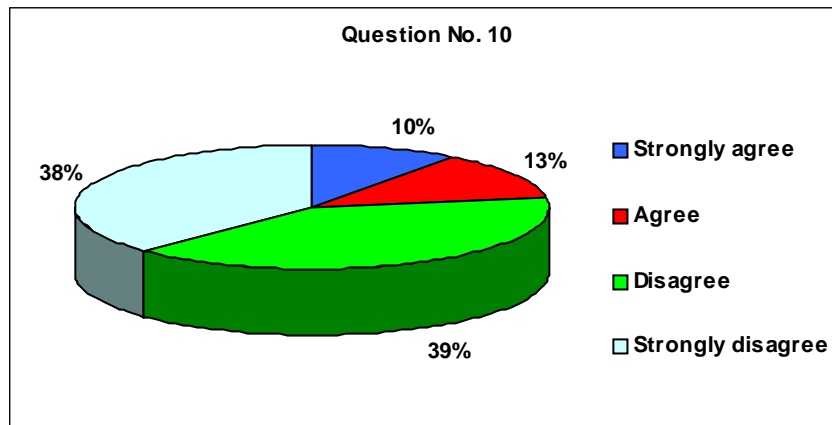


Figure 14 – Do you think that Internet will supersede trade fairs in future?

The last question was probably the most controversial one. Opinions of the respondents were immensely different. 23 % of them do believe that trade fairs' mission will be piddling or extensively minor. 39 % disagree and 38 % of the respondents strongly disagree with the hypothesis that Internet will supersede trade fairs in future. The respondents who predict poor future for trade shows argue for development of Internet technologies and they think that Internet will be one of the most important communication tools. On the other hand trade show backers stand for the growth of exhibiting. They think that face-to-face communication will be still very important in doing business.

6.4 Assessment of set hypotheses

Hypotheses that were set before primary research have to be confirmed or disputed.

- **1st hypothesis** – Exhibiting at the trade fairs is less attractive thanks to still increasing total costs.

1st hypothesis can not be either confirmed or disputed. 53 % of the respondents think that costs are acceptable. The second half of the company representatives is not satisfied and thinks that company participation at the trade fair is too expensive.

- **2nd hypothesis** – Most of asked companies have a company website and invest in Internet marketing.

This hypothesis was absolutely confirmed. All respondents use various tools of Internet marketing and own a company website.

- **3rd hypothesis** – At least 40 % of the respondents will claim that Internet supersedes trade fair in near future.

Against all odds this hypothesis was not confirmed. Only 23 % of the respondents agreed with the fact that the Internet would supersede trade fairs in future. That is believable that trade shows remain still important in the marketing communications.

6.5 SWOT analysis

Table 4 – SWOT analysis of trade fairs

SWOT analysis of trade fairs	
Positive	Negative
Strengths	Weaknesses
Relatively stable position in the communication mix	Trade fair atmosphere appropriate for doing business
Internationalization of trade fairs	Little small and regional events
Potential buyers and sellers meet at the same time and place	Only small amount of exhibition centers certificated by LEED organization
News and innovations presented just there	Environmental impact
Occasion for a face to face communication	Consolidation of the trade shows
	Poor trade fairs promotion
Opportunities	Threats
Growing interest in exhibiting	Online trade shows
Low competition among trade show organizers	Companies' lower trade show budgets
Undermined importance of other media	Internet
Growing demand of foreign exhibitors	Low state support
	Decreasing demand of exhibitors
	Poor attendance
	Environmental restrictions
	Changing technologies
	Certification of the exhibition centers

7 PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

The aim of this chapter is to suggest improvements and recommendations, which would help companies to participate at trade fairs successfully. All proposals are based on the both researches and SWOT analysis, which were done within the thesis. The participation at the trade fair would not be effective without using appropriate marketing strategies. Moreover most companies evaluate their exhibiting after the event and they compare their expenditures to their total ROI. The aim of the companies is to maximize effect of the exhibiting with minimal possible costs. Therefore not only marketing strategies will be part of this chapter but also new ways of exhibiting, which would reduce total costs.

7.1 Recommendations for trade fair preparation

Companies, which consider exhibiting at the trade fair, should evaluate the situation at the market. They should know if the ‘big players’ will be on the scene and consider possibility of exhibiting at the less prestigious event where the chance to attract attendees’ attention is much higher. Although smaller events usually take place at the regional level, participating there can bring a success. It is a challenge mainly for smaller exhibitors, which do not have large trade show budgets for exhibiting at the national level. On the other hand bigger companies, which participate at the smaller event, will be definitely in interest of other participants. The companies should in own self-interest take way that helps them to be seen in a favourable light.

- **Setting objectives**

Trade show budgeting and setting objectives are other aspects of the preparation, which should not be underestimated. Companies should set objectives a long time before beginning of the event and realize which ones are the priority ones and which ones are less important. The objectives should not be general but highly specific. The company representatives need to have clarified goals because their acting is dependent on that. Without clear objectives is exhibiting at the trade fairs wasting of time and money. Surprisingly most companies at the Go and RegionTour trade fair in Brno had not set objectives clearly and some of the company representatives only guess why they participate and they can not decide among offered answers. If the company wants to maximize their ROI, analogous cases should be avoided.

- **Creating a trade show budget**

Budgeting trade show is the most important part of the preparation and companies should determine which part of the exhibiting demand the most financial resources. Although a draft of expenses is only theoretical it gives the imagination about the total costs. Of course, companies can not predict unexpected costs that appear during the exhibition. The companies, which have never planned trade show budget can find an inspiration at the Internet, where are available various examples of worksheets which includes probable costs of the participation at the trade fair. Wrong budgeting can cause that companies are not satisfied with the trade fair effectiveness in relation to the total financial costs. Actually, they often underestimate creating the budget or make it undervalued and then after the event the total costs do not fit their previous conceptions. In short trade show budget should be done precisely and with the nest egg for unpredictable situations, which can occur during the exhibiting.

7.2 Recommendations in marketing activities

- **Company websites and search engine strategy**

Company websites and search engines are related together. Using them simultaneously is the most effective way to improve the access to the information about the company. Search engines make it possible to find information about the company in every time of the day. By tapping a few words on the keyboard can be find information about the company acting at the trade fairs and other up-to-date affairs which refer to that firm. That is all possible only when companies' websites are updated regularly and provided information is reliable. During the event should company website contain product demonstrations, press articles, booth activities and other information which are incidental to the participation at trade fairs. It is helpful for people who can not attend the event or for those who were interested in the company's products and want to see them again. Establishing credibility is the major aim of these promotional techniques.

- **Email campaigns**

Email campaign is another method of promoting company participation at the trade fair. These emails are sent before, during and also after the event and inform recipients about everything related to the company participation at the trade show. Companies should send them a few weeks before the announced start of the trade show so that the recipients could react on them adequately. The main purpose of the pre-show emails is to inform potential

attendees that the company will exhibit at the event. Beside that email can also contains coupons or free entrance tickets which allow attendees to visit the event for a free of charge. It can fulfill purpose of attracting new attendees, which would not come if they had to pay an entrance fee. On the other hand these free tickets have not to be provided to all recipients on the mailing list but only to the loyal attendees, which have already done some business with the company. Providing information during the event is not as usual because exhibitors do not have time to summarize each day of the exhibiting and send it among addressees. On the other hand the use of this strategy can help to raise a company consciousness. If a company uses email campaigns a follow-up strategy should not be omitted. It usually contains information about the company's acting at the trade fair, if the goals were achieved and other additional reports evaluating total trade show assets.

Search engine marketing strategy, emails or company websites are marketing tools which are both low-cost and also effective ways of supporting companies' participation at trade fairs. The base of using these strategies is to have an access to Internet and be versed in its usage. Apparently no-cost marketing, which includes these strategies, is one of the most effective ways to attract attendee's attention and the company can save a huge sum of money by using it.

- **Online advertising**

Banners and pop ups which alert to companies' websites are other tools that can be used in the pre-show and at-show marketing. These techniques are a part of the online advertising and their aim is to notify of the company participation at the trade fair. These banners refer to the official trade show websites or to the company's web, where are included detailed information about a specific trade fair. These kinds of advertisings are usually placed at the websites or servers, which are somehow related to the topic of the trade show.

- **Media package**

Use of media mainly in pre-show marketing is not as popular and this type of advertising is available only for "big players", which do not need to save money. On the other hand if this expensive way of promoting is used, there is almost absolute certainty that the company get to the customer's awareness.

7.3 Participating at the online trade shows

Although all of the responded companies have a website and Internet is regarded as a powerful marketing tool, online trade shows are not known enough. It is a pity that exhibiting online in our country is not provided by any organization but companies can participate at the online events, which are arranged abroad. The best way to attract the most customers is to exhibit in both ways, classically and online. On the other hand the companies, which have smaller trade show budget and regard classical events as wasting of financial resources should try this modern type of exhibiting. The online exhibitions are not held only for a few days as the classical ones and therefore attendees have more time to see the product range and offered services. The only demand for hi-tech exhibiting is a usage of modern technologies for communication with the potential customers. A virtual trade show booth is usually provided by a supplying firm, which designs it according to the customer's demand. I recommend monitoring of the providers' websites, where are usually listed upcoming events. If the type of the event corresponds with the company mission then it is possible to register and try to get the customers in a more effective and comfortable way.

7.4 Untraditional exhibiting

Traditional exhibiting is still on the same level in popularity. But non-traditional ways of exhibiting always attract attendees' attention. Companies should try to be outstanding and use promoting ways, which would overmatch the competitors. Mobile marketing or outdoor trade shows are prompting to some action, on which the attendees do not forget. Ways of exhibiting mentioned above are a good example of the unconventional exhibiting. People do know traditional trade show booths well and exhibitors do not have chance to surprise with anything new. In case of mobile marketing attendees do not know what they can expect from the exhibition area, which is a part of the van or lorry. It attracts their attention and they likely visit it. Another tool for gaining attention can be competitions. Especially Czech people like competitions and price winning and basically this stuff brings crowds to the company booth.

CONCLUSION

The aim of my Bachelor thesis was to analyze current trade fairs situation and suggest improvements, which would help the companies to exhibit in a more effective way. The base of my work was to assemble information from the different sources, which would describe trends and innovations in the trade show industry. This information were assessed and compiled in the theoretical part of my thesis.

For analyzing trade show situation practically was chosen primary research consisting of questionnaire investigation and SWOT analysis. The aim of these methods was to analyze trade fair situation from the exhibitors' perspective. The primary research revealed weaknesses of the companies' participation at the trade fairs. The companies prepare for the trade fairs improperly and their marketing activities do not fit the idea of the effective promotion.

The most problematic is a usage of the online marketing strategies. According to the research all of the responded representatives claimed that their company uses Internet marketing. If they were asked to specify that, surprisingly their answers were almost the same. Their Internet marketing lies only in a company website and occasional email campaigns. Because of that I mainly focused on the marketing strategies, which would help them to promote their companies in a better way and also on the unconventional exhibiting, which should entice more attendees.

My recommendations are focusing principally on a usage of marketing strategies, which do not affect trade show budget so dramatically. A company website together with the search engine strategy and email campaigns forms an effective and inexpensive way of a company promotion called no-cost marketing. The companies should use these techniques with the aim to attract people for visiting a trade show. The companies should also exhibit more unconventionally because it always attracts potential customers. I also recommend participation at the online events that are much cheaper and offer comparable services with the traditional ones. Although it may seem that Internet can be regarded as an enemy of trade fairs (according to the SWOT analysis), it can be also used as its promotional tool. The progress of Internet technologies and its accessibility plays a significant role in the online marketing strategies and the trade shows promotion by Internet is a need in today's successful exhibiting.

I have to admit that searching information for my Bachelor thesis was really difficult because Czech trade fairs situation is changing minimally and any improvements are not

explored. That is why most of the secondary sources are oversea and here is no certainty that all of the mentioned advices are applicable on the trade fairs held in the Czech Republic. On the other hand the findings and experience that I acquired during the writing my thesis are invaluable and I hope that I will use some of them when I will exhibit at the trade fairs again.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

B2B	Business to business
VIP	Very important person
IMC	Integrated marketing communications
PR	Public relations
Max.	Maximum
3D	Three dimensions
LEED	Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
Wi-Fi	Wireless Fidelity
ROI	Return Of Investment
PPC	Pay Per Click

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APPENDIX P I: VIRTUAL TRADE SHOW BOOTHS



APPENDIX P II: QUESTIONNAIRE IN CZECH LANGUAGE

Dotazník

Jméno vystavující firmy:

1. Mezi jaký typ společnosti se řadíte?

- Tuzemská
- Tuzemská se zahraniční účastí
- Zahraniční

2. Účastníte se veletrhů pravidelně?

- Ano
- Ne

3. Jaký je hlavní cíl účasti vaší firmy na veletrhu?(maximálně dvě možnosti)

- Prezentace firmy
- Budování image
- Prezentace nového produktu
- Navazování obchodních kontaktů
- Předjednání kontraktů
- Uzavření obchodu
- Jiné (blíže specifikujte).....

4. Vyhovuje vám složení návštěvníků? (Z pohledu jejich odbornosti)

- Ano
- Spíše ano
- Spíše ne
- Ne

5. Považujete veletrh jako efektivní nástroj marketingové komunikace?

- Ano
- Spíše ano
- Spíše ne
- Ne

6. Je pro vás účast na veletrhu z hlediska vynaložených finančních nákladů stále atraktivní?

- Ano
- Spíše ano
- Spíše ne
- Ne

7. Považujete internet jako spolehlivý nástroj pro prezentaci firmy?

- Ano
- Ne

8. Má vaše firma webové stránky a investuje do internetového marketingu?

- Ano
- Ne

9. Znáte pojem „internetový veletrh“?

- Ano
- Ne

10. Myslíte že internet v budoucnosti převeze úlohu veletrhu?

- Ano
- Spíše ano
- Spíše ne
- Ne

APPENDIX P III: QUESTIONNAIRE IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE

Questionnaire

Company name:

1. To what type of the business does your company belong?

- Domestic
- Domestic with a participation in foreign markets
- International

2. Do you participate in trade fairs regularly?

- Yes
- No

3. What are your major objectives at the trade fair?

- Company presentation
- Image building
- Presentation of a new product
- Establishing business contacts
- Order negotiation
- Making business
- Another ones (Please specify that).....

4. Are you satisfied with a composition of attendees? (With a view to their qualification)

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

5. Do you regard trade fair as an efficient tool of the marketing communications?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

6. Is your active participation at the trade fair still attractive with a view to the total financial costs?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

7. Do you regard Internet as a reliable tool for a company presentation?

- Yes
- No

8. Does your company own website and invest in Internet marketing?

- Yes
- No

9. Are you aware of the fact that also online trade shows do exist?

- Yes
- No, I have never heard about that

10. Do you think that Internet will supersede trade fairs in future?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree