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Press release

Final report f.re.e 2012

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- Very high marks from exhibitors and visitors
- Excellent response in bicycle sector, upswing in caravaning sector
- Combining f.re.e with Munich Car Days (Münchner Autotage) proves very successful

f.re.e, the trade fair for leisure and travel that was held at Messe München from February 22 – 26, came to an end with more than 120,000 visitors, an increase of more than 25 percent. The atmosphere in the exhibition halls was very good on all five days of the fair, and many exhibitors noted that lots of visitors were making purchases and placing orders. They were also optimistic about the increased share of repeat visitors.

Dr. Reinhard Pfeiffer, Managing Director of Messe München, was positive about the results of the five-day fair: "Once again, f.re.e took a real leap forward in 2012. The visitors had nothing but praise for the fair, and the exhibitors were very satisfied with its results. The caravaning sector in particular was very well received this year. Naturally, the Munich Car Days go very well with this sector."

The car show was held in conjunction with f.re.e for the first time in 2012. Monika Dech, Business Unit Director at Messe München, was very pleased with the response: "Nearly all of the visitors were extremely positive about holding f.re.e and Munich Car Days at the same time." For Hans Georg Bechthold from the Munich Car Days, the combination proved to be very successful: "The concept was convincing, especially since caravaning and the Munich Car Days complement one another so well. The attendance figures were considerably higher than our expectations. Plenty of cars were purchased and test driven."

Kurt Gandl from W. u. K. Gandl Vertriebs GmbH is in favor of continuing this collaborative effort: "Combining the fair with the Munich Car Days makes the caravaning hall even more attractive. We are very satisfied because we had several new customers this year."

Exhibitors in all of the sectors at f.re.e were thrilled about the strong demand and that visitors were so interested in purchasing products. According to a visitor survey by TNS infratest, 67 percent said that they had made purchases or placed orders, and 84 percent of all f.re.e visitors said that they were planning on doing so after the fair was over.

As in the past, the bicycle sector was extremely popular this year. Besides all the chances to gather information and make purchases, visitors used the large bicycle course to test products before they bought them. The Managing Director of ADFC Bayern, Markus Schildhauer, was pleased about the positive response from the visitors: "Compared to previous years, this year's f.re.e experienced a great deal of growth. The combination of bicycle manufacturers, the test course and bicycle tourism was very successful. We are really looking forward to next year."

In keeping with experience, the tourism sector including destinations both near and far was very popular. There was a noticeable trend toward vacationing in Bavaria and the Alpine region. Franz Reil from the Munich and Upper Bavaria Tourism Association: "Like every year, we are extremely satisfied with this year's f.re.e. There were considerably more marketing activities for this year's fair, and that had a direct effect on the number of visitors."

In the travel sector, this year's partner country was Slovenia, which showcased itself with a number of attractions on various stages. Majda Rozina Dolenc, Director of the Slovenian Tourism Office in Munich, is more than satisfied with the exhibit during f.re.e: "The partnership with f.re.e allowed us to draw even more visitor attention to Slovenia and to our stand, and demand for vacations in our country has increased considerably."

Interest in the watersports sector was also high. The activity areas in particular were very popular among visitors. Torsten Gläßer from Tauchsport Gläßer: "Compared to last year, there was considerably more interest in the 'trial diving' exhibit. Young visitors in particular took advantage of this offer." Beach World, which offered training courses for wind and kite surfing, was a special highlight. Jörg Michaelsen from Tatort Hawaii gave the premiere a positive rating: "Visitors liked the combination of the activity area, boat bar and beach feeling, especially given the somewhat poor weather."

Exhibitors in all sectors praised the quality of the visitors. Such as Paul Uhlir, Managing Director of Moving Moments, in the Health and Wellness sector: "We definitely see a clear improvement of f.re.e. compared to last year. The quality of the visitors gets better each year. We came to f.re.e specifically to get feedback about our yoga concept from end consumers."

The next f.re.e – the Fair for Leisure and Travel – will be held at the Messe München trade-fair center from Wednesday, February 20 to Sunday, February 24, 2013.

Additional exhibition statements about f.re.e 2012 – The Fair for Leisure and Travel

(alphabetically by last name)

Berger Fahrzeuge Neumarkt GmbH

Andreas Binder, Head of Vehicles Division

“For our company, f.re.e has been an important advertising medium for years because no other trade fair has as many newcomers. Now that it also includes the Munich Car Days, that will be truer than ever.”

FTI Touristik GmbH

Christy Child, Event Marketing & Trade Fairs

“The atmosphere at f.re.e 2012 is great. Since the schools are on break for Carnival, we’ve seen a lot more families and young couples this year than in the past. The audience is extremely diverse and corresponds to our target group. Visitors can book their vacations directly at the stand or get some simple advice. Plenty of visitors make use of these services. As a Munich-based travel organizer, being represented at f.re.e is a must.”

Croatian Center for Tourism

Romeo Draghicchio, Head of Munich Office

“Because so many tourists come from this area, f.re.e is very important to us. This year’s event was outstanding. For us, this is one of the most important fairs in Germany.”

WaterWorld

Michael Dreisbusch, Managing Director

“All in all, this year’s leisure and travel fair was positive. Our exhibit at f.re.e is important for direct sales and recruiting new customers. We reached these goals.”

Grabner GmbH

Gregor Grabner, Responsible for Trade Fairs

“For us, f.re.e is a very good trade fair for leisure that allows us to call attention to our company among interested new customers. The 2012 fair is going well so far, and interest in our boats has been high.”

Auto Eder GmbH, Kolbermoor

Peter Grubauer, Sales Director

“The bottom line is basically positive. f.re.e is a good platform for our products.”

Hungarian Tourism Office

Bernadett Gyuricza, Regional Director South Germany

“There were lots of visitors at f.re.e 2012. Munich and southern Germany are very important regions to Hungary. We primarily use our exhibit to cultivate our image, distribute information, make contacts and acquire new customers. It’s also nice to have a chance to participate in the stage events as an exhibitor.”

Segelschule / Yachtcharter Weiss-Blau

Sabine Haas, Owner

“Holding the fair during the school break is beneficial, and our exhibit at f.re.e is important advertising for our sailing school. Personal discussions and direct customer support are essential for acquiring new customers.”

Globetrotter Ausrüstung

Simone Heer, Event Management

“Thanks to the school holiday, attendance was very good. The pleasant atmosphere and our good location were also helpful.”

Klepper Faltbootwerft AG

Illfat el Keilany, Press Manager

“We are very pleased with our exhibit at this year’s f.re.e. Visitors were very interested in making purchases, and demand for our world premiere BACKYAK was very high.”

HSC Health Sport Connection GmbH

Andreas Körber, Managing Director

“All in all, f.r.e.e 2012 was very successful and is generally an important event for our company. The objective of this year’s exhibit was to increase awareness of our ‘RAKTOR’ product and the ‘RAKKA’ dance program. Both were very well received.”

Winora Group

Wolfgang Kümmerer, Responsible for Trade Fairs

“We are very satisfied with our results at f.re.e 2012. Our goal was to contact end consumers and acquire them for our specialty retailers. We are convinced that we achieved that goal at f.re.e.”

Cannondale

Karl-Heinz Leidel, Responsible for Trade Fairs

“Customer traffic was strong on all five days of the fair, and there was plenty of interest in our products. We returned to this year’s f.re.e after a long break, and we are very pleased with the results.”

Hapag-Lloyd Kreuzfahrten

Andreas Leippert, Sales Director Southern Germany / Western Austria

“f.re.e is and will remain our exhibition platform of choice in Bavaria. We demonstrate our presence here, answer plenty of questions and received several orders and reservations. Our presence on the BR stage is also important.”

Nautirad

Bruno Maitre, Owner

“Participating in f.re.e is worthwhile. Any customer who wants to remain active, athletic and healthy will find something to suit their taste. Many customers are taking advantage of this opportunity. I am waiting for orders to come in.”

Wohnwagen Gérard

Klaus Ostenrieder, Sales Director

“Compared to previous years, we have had many more customers at our stand. Combining this event with the Munich Car Days has had very positive results for us. We acquired newcomers, and demand for our rental models has increased considerably.”

AOKI Apotheken Vertriebs GmbH, Germany

Jürgen Rohrbach, Stand Manager

“All in all, this year’s travel and leisure fair was above average. We primarily use the fair to advertise our company and promote sales. We reached both objectives.”

Vorarlberg Tourismus GmbH, Austria

Paul Schelling, Marketing Vorarlberg Tourismus GmbH

“The fair was very well organized. We reached our goals, which were to call guests’ attention to the Vorarlberg region, communicate how easy it is to reach the region and make new customer contacts. The fact that exhibitors were able to present themselves on the stages free of charge was a great offer that we are considering taking advantage of again in 2013.”

Südsalz GmbH, Salzbergwerk Berchtesgaden, Germany

Manfred Schindler, Marketing and Events

“f.r.e.e is very important to us because so many people from Munich and the surrounding area make one-day excursions to come here. Attendance was very good. The objective of our exhibit was to cultivate contacts and acquire new customers.”

Czech Republic

Marketa Vogelova, Marketing Director

“f.re.e 2012 went very well for us. Germany is one of our most important source markets for acquiring new customers and presenting the range of tourist attractions that the Czech market has to offer.”

About Messe München International

Messe München International is one of the world’s leading trade-fair companies. In Munich alone it organizes around 40 trade fairs for capital and consumer goods, and key high-tech industries. Each year more than 30,000 exhibitors and over two million visitors take part in the events held at Messe München, the ICM – Internationales Congress Center München, and the MOC Veranstaltungszentrum. The leading international trade fairs of Messe München International are all FKM-certified, i.e. exhibitor and visitor numbers and the figures for exhibition space are collected in line with agreed standards and independently audited on behalf of the FKM (Gesellschaft zur Freiwilligen Kontrolle von Messe- und Ausstellungszahlen), a society for the voluntary monitoring of fair and exhibition statistics. In addition, Messe München International organizes trade fairs in Asia, Russia, the Middle East and South America. With six subsidiaries in Europe and Asia and more than 60 foreign representatives actively serving over 90 countries, Messe München International has a worldwide business network. The Group also takes a pioneering role as regards sustainability: It is the first trade-fair company to be awarded energy-efficiency certification from the technical inspection authorities TÜV SÜD.

