

Article

A regional equestrian fair: requirements of exhibitors and sponsors

Stefanie Schroer
(stefanie2.schroer@wur.nl)
Hogeschool Van Hall Larenstein, 6708 PB Wageningen
T: 0317 - 486 230
www.van-hall-larenstein.nl

Introduction

The equine industry is a large industry. One important segment of this industry are equestrian exhibitions. Many equestrian sport fairs are organised by different companies all over the world. The biggest equestrian exhibition in Germany is the EQUITANA in Essen. One new open air exhibition named “Pferd & Freizeit” will be launched for the first time in July 2010 in Dülmen. Next to the visitors, exhibitors and sponsors are needed to ensure the financial viability and the quality of an event. Therefore it is important to satisfy their requirements as good as possible.

The exhibition industry in Germany is a huge market and provides versatile possibilities for a presentation at a fair. Exhibitors have several reasons to participate in a fair although they are mainly used as marketing tool. Furthermore the sponsorship of an event is an important issue within the organisation and different sponsoring opportunities are offered to generate additional money. Common sponsoring services offered during an exhibition include banner, logo on promotional materials, obstacles with firm logo and internet sponsoring services.

Exhibitions are held at different locations as exhibition centres, sport gyms, schools, stadiums etc. which provide a suitable infrastructure. The individual booth presentation is one of the main factors influencing the success for a company with regard to the exhibition leading to various requirements. Electricity, Water and W-Lan are often used to create an individual presentation and attract visitors. During the organisation of the new open air exhibition “Pferd & Freizeit Dülmen” a discussion on the requirements of exhibitors and sponsors came up. Therefore the overall objective of this thesis research was to investigate the main requirements of exhibitors and sponsors concerning regional equestrian fairs and to determine the most suitable market segment for Dülmen.

What was done?

First of all previous literature was used to get an overview on the topic and to collect important information. Based on this, a questionnaire consisting of 19 questions in total was developed and the necessary data was collected from potential exhibitors and sponsors within a 100km radius around Dülmen. The collected sample of the 52 data was evaluated and analysed with a statistic computer program named SPSS. Finally all information was connected within a report consisting of 10 chapters.

And what was found?

First of all general information on the company as well as information on previous participations regarding exhibitions was collected. The participants were chosen from all market segments regardless to the size of their company. Half of the participants have already participated in an exhibition before.

The majority of the participants indicated marketing as main objective which is according to previous literature. Primarily both visitor groups or solely private visitors are targeted by the participants. Most equestrian fairs are organised over three days. This seems to be an attractive duration as three days were mostly indicated leading to the fact that a short duration is preferred by a large fragment of the potential customers. Of course the planning process is very important for the organisation of an exhibition. Mostly a minimum planning time of three months is required. Some companies need up to one year time for planning as they need to plan their marketing budget. Furthermore the majority would use the internet for booking and planning processes.

Inside exhibitions are more often offered than open air exhibitions. One example in the equine exhibition industry to offer the opportunity to choose between booking a booth inside or outside is the Eurocheval in Offenburg even though this choice is not common to offer. A booth inside a hall is preferred by the majority of the participants due to independence from the weather.

Also an own individual stand construction is preferred. Different booth types include row stands (one open side), corner stand (two open sides), block stand (three open sides) and island stands (four open sides). Corner stands and block stands are most likely booked.

Additional services, especially electricity, are required by all participants. The required time for build up and dismantling is very important for the logistic plan of an event. A half day is mostly needed for build up and dismantling. It was also shown that bigger companies are likely to need more time for build up and dismantling which can be explained by more complex booth constructions. Big companies are also more likely to book sponsoring services than small companies. The logo on promotional print materials is a frequently booked sponsoring opportunity. An additional service related to sponsoring is required by the majority of the participants. This is for

example a mutual agreement or a special VIP-/ catering area.

What does this mean to the industry?

Exhibitions are an attractive marketing tool used by companies from all market segments. They should be planned as early as possible to secure enough time for planning processes. Exhibitors and sponsors from the market segments organisation/ association/ club and livery yard/ riding school are not used to exhibit and need therefore special support from the organising committee. Within this process the internet is an effective tool and can be used to save paper and time. The exhibition area, preferably inside, should provide a suitable infrastructure including electricity, water and internet connection.

The importance of the booth presentation is recognized by many exhibitors and the possibility for an individual presentation should be provided. As most of the participants indicated half day for build up and dismantling, a good logistic plan should be made in advance.

The common sponsoring services are attractive to the target group. Additional opportunities as internet sponsoring should be offered as they provide great potential. Furthermore a special services for sponsors before and especially during the event should be provided. This can be for example mutual agreements, special advertisement in advance and a VIP-/ Catering area during the event.

Finally a questionnaire should be developed for visitors and exhibitors with regard to the actual exhibition to measure the success and the customer satisfaction.

It became clear within this research that there is a high need to consider many requirements of exhibitors and sponsors leading to a higher customer satisfaction.

Why was this done?

The research was carried out between March 2010 and May 2010 within a bachelor thesis project of Van Hall Larenstein, the Netherlands. Larenstein is an international university known for its practical education. The bachelor Equine, Leisure and Sports is a four year study program. Study contents include for example business, event organisation, sports performance, veterinary science etc. Next to the practical education, Larenstein is known for its internationally. Lecture language is English and partnerships with other universities abroad offer opportunities to get valuable experiences. Support is available all the time and the whole thesis project was coached and supported by a thesis coach from Larenstein.

References and further information

References and any further information can be found in the report. Please contact Van Hall Larenstein for the details.