The International Dental Show (IDS) 2019, which ran over five days, from 12 to 16 March, in Cologne in Germany, more than fulfilled the high expectations of the international industry, again underlining its exceptional position as the undisputed leading global trade fair of the dental industry. The show was able to replicate the very good results of the previous event and the organisers realised their ambitious goals for greater internationality and higher quality in supply and demand. The outcome of the trade fair consequently led to satisfied exhibitors and trade visitors.

With 2,327 companies from 64 countries participating, IDS 2019 welcomed 20 more exhibitors, as well as over 160,000 trade visitors from 166 countries. The overall number of visitors rose by 4.0 per cent up to 170,000 m².

Mark Stephen Pace, Chairman of the Board of the Association of the German Dental Industry (VDDI), which is involved in organising the event, remarked: “The strengths of this leading trade fair can be expressed in the words ‘sporting, fair competition’: the comprehensive and internationally unique offering, as well as the exceptional performance and innovative strength of the industry, combined with the firm intention of all market players to improve continually and pursue success in direct competition. Anyone who wants to be successful in the dental industry faces performance comparison in Cologne. It is, thus, no surprise that the level of internationality of IDS has grown so substantially.”

Gerald Böse, President and CEO of Koelnmesse, which stages the show, added: “IDS is a trade fair in a class of its own and always sets new benchmarks. It manages to surpass the already excellent results of the previous event every time.” Both visitors and exhibitors are impressed by IDS: it is only here that one encounters supply and demand of such an extent, quality and level of internationality. “IDS is the undisputed leading global trade fair for the dental industry,” he continued.

The official figures confirm the high level of internationality at IDS: 73.0 per cent of the exhibitors came from abroad (64 countries) and 62.0 per cent of the visitors from 166 countries, including Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Egypt, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, South Africa and the US, as well as many European countries. The number of countries of origin thus increased once again by 6.0 per cent. IDS 2019 recorded significant growth in the number of visitors from Asia (+23.1 per cent), Eastern Europe (+19.6 per cent), Africa (+17.0 per cent), Central and South America (+14.6 per cent) and North America (+5.3 per cent).

However, it was not only the level of internationality and number of visitors that particularly pleased IDS 2019 exhibitors; many also commented on the high quality of the visitors. An independent survey confirmed this: about 80.0 per cent of those who completed the survey were involved in procurement decisions, and 32.0 per cent of them decisively. The decision-making power among foreign visitors was even higher: over 49.0 per cent of the survey respondents stated that they were autonomously responsible for procurement decisions.
At the booths, it was reported that all of the occupational groups of the industry from all over the globe were present. According to the survey, the largest groups came from dental practices, dental laboratories and the dental industry, but schools and universities were also strongly represented. Almost 30.0 per cent of the respondents were either board members or company or plant managers.

Almost 80.0 per cent of the visitors who completed the survey were satisfied or very satisfied with the range of exhibition offerings. More than 93.0 per cent said that they would recommend a visit to IDS to a good business acquaintance, and 70.0 per cent of the respondents were already planning to visit the next IDS in 2021.

Dr Markus Heibach, Executive Director of the VDDI, was also pleased with the outcome of the trade fair: “The high level of satisfaction of our trade visitors and exhibitors is for us impressive confirmation of our efforts to make our guests’ stay as pleasant and successful as possible by offering them a cosmopolitan, hospitable and perfect service.”

**High interest in innovations**

IDS is the ideal business platform, especially for new companies on the dental market seeking to establish themselves with high-quality innovations. Steve Plakotaris, CEO and Managing Director of Australian start-up Dr Mark’s HyGenie, confirmed this: “As a world first oral hygiene innovation, with global brand potential, it made perfect sense to debut our company and removable oral appliance hygiene range at the world’s biggest and busiest dental industry showcase. Despite being a small Australian start-up, we felt right at home at IDS and the results have exceeded all our expectations. Contacts, connections and new friends are being made every hour of every day. We look forward to booking our place at IDS 2021.”

Both trade representatives and users were extremely interested in the state-of-the-art products and technologies on display. The focus of IDS 2019 was on products and systems for improved digital workflows and additive manufacture, new prophylactic formulas and filling materials, innovative intraoral scanners and implant designs, as well as flexible workflows for management of the laboratory.

**German dentist and dental technician associations strike a positive balance**

“IDS is a phenomenon: the atmosphere is so international, thirsty for knowledge and open that it was simply very inspiring once again this year. Digitalisation can improve the workflows of practices, but shouldn’t be implemented non-critically or too hastily,” said Dr Peter Engel, President of the German Federal Dental Association (Bundeszahnärztekammer), which is an IDS partner.

He underlined the significance of the dental industry as a major employer and economic driver in the health sector.
“A local dentist employs between four and five employees on average. Trained dental employees are the heart of every dental practice—without them a practice wouldn’t work. Skilled dental employees, therefore, require recognition, as well as inspiration and know-how,” he explained.

The same applies to dental technicians. Dominik Kruchen, President of the association of German dental technician guilds (Verband Deutscher Zahntechniker-Innungen), also an IDS partner, summed up as follows: “IDS demonstrated at what speed the digital dental world is developing. One has to weigh up the risks, recognise one’s own opportunities and take investment decisions based on good judgement.” On the role of dental laboratories, Kruchen commented that master dental technicians and their teams are irreplaceable experts in the provision of dental restorations. In close collaboration with dentists, their expertise, for example regarding the selection and use of different materials, ensures an individual offering for patients. “Well-trained young professionals are important for a strong dental technology trade. Highly trained young dental technician apprentices once again impressively demonstrated their skills at this year’s IDS in the scope of the Gysi prize competition,” he emphasised.

**Social commitment of dentists**

Following tradition, the German Federal Dental Association’s conference of aid organisations took place at IDS. It is a source of ideas for dental aid projects and offers a forum for personal exchange. Around 60 dental aid projects and organisations are currently represented within the association’s network, the essential aim of which is to provide mutual assistance and exchange. The projects provide aid and support in a number of ways within Germany and Europe, as well as worldwide. In Germany, for example, many dentists are very committed to helping people of lower socioeconomic standing and those in need of emergency assistance. These dentists treat people without health insurance and offer aid organisations both monetary and in-kind support. Many dental aid organisations are engaged in international projects that provide assistance in acute humanitarian situations such as natural disasters and in crisis regions or offer patients dental treatment locally.

**IDS 2019 compared with IDS 2017 in figures**

Hosted over a gross exhibition area of 170,000 m² (2017: 163,000 m²), 2,327 companies from 64 countries participated in IDS 2019 (2017: 2,305 companies from 60 countries). These included 628 exhibitors from Germany, of which 18 were new IDS participants (2017: 644 exhibitors, including 20 new companies), as well as 1,699 exhibitors from abroad, of which 49 were new IDS participants (2017: 1,661 exhibitors, including 44 new companies). The share of foreign exhibitors was 73 per cent (2017: 72 per cent). Including estimates for the last day of the fair, over 160,000 trade visitors from 166 countries attended IDS (2017: 155,000 trade visitors from 156 countries), approximately 62 per cent of whom (2017: 60 per cent) came from abroad.*

The 39th IDS is scheduled to take place from 9 to 13 March 2021.

Photographs courtesy of Koelnmesse (www.ids-cologne.de).

* The figures relating to visitors, exhibitors and exhibition space for this trade fair were determined and certified according to the standardised definitions used by the Society of Voluntary Control of Fair and Exhibition Statistics.
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www.ceede.pl

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