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Press

April 2010

Interview with Monika Dech, Business Unit Director at Messe München, and Erhard Wienkamp, Messe Düsseldorf Division Director, on the cooperation agreement between drink technology India and International PackTech India

Strong alliance for new trading platform in India

Messe München and Messe Düsseldorf surprised everyone last September with the announcement that the two companies would be working together in India in the future. drink technology India and International PackTech India are being marketed jointly and coordinating all their activities. The joint venue from 18 to 20 November 2010 for both trade fairs will be the Bombay Exhibition Centre in Mumbai. There are two trade fair heavyweights behind this cooperation: drinktec, leading world fair for beverage and liquid food technology, in Munich and interpack, the most important trade fair in the world for the packaging industry, in Düsseldorf. Monika Dech, Business Unit Director at Messe München, and Erhard Wienkamp, Messe Düsseldorf Division Director, tell us how this unusual alliance came about, what it aims to achieve and how things are going.

You announced at drinktec last September that your subsidiaries in India would be working together in the areas of organisation and marketing in the future. How did that come about?

Dech: It started at drink technology India 2007, which was then called drink technology + PET India. The event was conceived as a hotel conference with an accompanying exhibition, and that worked very well. Our idea was that the conference would slowly develop into a trade fair. It took place again in 2008 at the Grand Hyatt Hotel, and was well received, but the event was overshadowed by the terrorist attacks in Mumbai at that time. After a break in the drinktec year of 2009 and after many talks with representatives from the industry and Germany's engineering federation, the VDMA, we decided on a fresh start. We have had many talks with Messe Düsseldorf about joint projects in India over the past few years. Together we can perform even more strongly there, utilising synergies and bringing our experience and knowledge to this market. Now it has finally all come together.

Wienkamp: I am very pleased that Messe München and Messe Düsseldorf are taking a big step in the right direction. With the joint organisation of drink technology India and International PackTech India, we are offering our customers an extremely interesting platform and counteracting the further fragmentation of the Indian trade fair market.

Messe Düsseldorf has been active in India since the 1980's, and we now have our own subsidiary with branches in New Delhi and Mumbai. This year we are organising a trade fair for the packaging industry for the sixth time, which means that we are doing a very good job of assessing the market forces, and can offer our customers from all over the world a suitable platform for their

business. Holding both trade fairs at the same time will substantially increase the drawing potential of both events.

What do you hope to gain from the cooperation?

Dech: For us it is all about placing drink technology India and International PackTech India on a new footing. The demand is there, the market has great potential and needs such a platform. The industries that participate in our fairs have expressly encouraged us to continue with our plans. Now we have to work out the fine detail. It is obvious that drink technology India and International PackTech India are mutually beneficial, as there are overlapping areas on both the exhibitor and visitor side, which was what led to our common interest in creating a trade platform for customers from both the packaging and the beverage and liquid food industry in India. Our set-ups are also similar. Messe München and Messe Düsseldorf both have subsidiaries in India which are cooperating closely on this project. And with drinktec and interpack supporting us, two leading world fairs are committed to the events.

Your trade fairs represent the beverage and packaging industries along with all the relevant technology. Why is India so important to these industries?

Wienkamp: First of all it is a huge market with around a billion people. The majority of these people still do not have access to hygienically packaged water and food. In addition there is a growing middle class. This already consists of two to three hundred million people who are adopting western standards of living, including food, drink and consumption habits in general, all of which is creating an enormous demand. We are seeing annual growth rates in double figures in the beverage, liquid food and food sector, and this boom in demand requires appropriate investment by the beverage and food industry. Plants and machinery must be modernised or set up. With drink technology India and International PackTech India we have created a trading platform which will bring together supply and demand in this industry in India and the surrounding region.

The events are to be marketed jointly. How are the campaigns coming along?

Dech: Both trade fairs will take place under one roof, so it makes sense to communicate that. Of course this also means that we can utilise synergy effects better and keep our target groups better informed by telling them about both events at the same time. For example, we are sending them joint press releases and a joint visitor's brochure. It is a logical step to enter our visitors into a joint database and it goes without saying that our websites will be appropriately linked.

Wienkamp: We are using the strengths of both companies and avoiding any duplication of work. As Ms Dech has already said, we are coordinating all marketing and communication activities and operating on the principle of division of labour. For example, Messe Düsseldorf is responsible for the technical support of all exhibitors, while one of Messe München's roles is organising the accompanying exhibitor workshops and seminars.

Do you already have specific plans for how you will proceed after 2010?

Dech: The idea of setting up a large, joint trading platform for packaging solutions and beverage and liquid food technology certainly implies long-term cooperation. Of course we need the support of the industry for that. If our joint

project is a success and we get positive feedback – which I am sure we will – then that will give us real impetus for the next event and we will be able to further refine our concept and optimise arrangements. The course is set, and now everything depends on how this dual event is received. I am very confident about it.

Wienkamp: I share this confidence! I am sure that both the exhibitors and the trade visitors will appreciate the bundling of expertise and the fact that the trade fairs are taking place at the same time. With this first joint project we are creating the foundation for continuing cooperation.

For information on the events in Mumbai, go to:
www.packtech-india.com and www.drinktechnology-india.com.

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