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Knowledge transfer between Koelnmesse and Marketing Center Münster

## Study on the future of trade fairs

**Findings show: Main focus remains on physical format | Digitality is an opportunity for 365-day platforms | Sector customisation is essential**

**What will the future of trade fairs be like? What goals do exhibitors pursue when participating in a trade fair? And how can trade fair teams best help their exhibitors to optimise their trade fair experience? Koelnmesse addressed these and other questions about the future of trade fairs in an academic study in partnership with the University of Münster. The results show that exhibitors still want the physical trade fair format.**

"The current crises have posed enormous challenges to the trade fair business model. We are being called upon to constantly prove the effectiveness of the trade fair format in practice with creative solutions. I am pleased to see that this project clearly confirms the future viability of our sector, also from an exhibitor perspective, and at the same time indicates the paths we will be taking in Cologne in the coming years.", says Cologne's Chief Executive Officer Gerald Böse.

In her dissertation, Victoria Kramer, a doctoral student at the Institute of Marketing under the supervision of Professor Dr Manfred Krafft, examined the acceptance of the digital trade fair formats developed during the pandemic. At the same time, the possibilities for the joint development of new formats were explored in an exchange between trade fair companies and exhibitors. The evaluation of extensive surveys shows that companies consider parallel physical and digital events to be very complex. Instead, they see the digital formats that have been tried and tested in recent years as an opportunity for 365-day platforms. However, both the physical events and the time-independent digital offerings require a clear sector focus.

"Working with the Marketing Centre was a valuable opportunity for us to empirically substantiate what we have experienced in practice and at the same time benefit from the know-how of the marketing experts in Münster," says Stefan Kranefeld, Vice President Sales at Koelnmesse GmbH. "Partnering with Koelnmesse enabled us to implement the world's first study on the role of exhibitors in hybrid and purely digital formats. Especially due to the radical changes the trade fair sector is undergoing, there is simply no alternative to such fundamental research," adds Professor Dr Krafft.

The strategic relevance of digital transformation in the trade fair sector, which has once again become clear within the context of this cooperation, had already been taken into account by Koelnmesse in 2020 with its creation of a new business unit.

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**Photo material for media representatives:**

[Bilddatenbank \(omn5.com\)](https://www.omn5.com)

**About Koelnmesse:**

Koelnmesse employs around 1,000 people. The city-centre trade fair at the heart of Europe occupies the third largest trade fair grounds in Germany and, spanning almost 400,000 square metres of hall and outdoor space, it numbers among the top ten worldwide. Each year, Koelnmesse organises and manages around 80 trade fairs, guest events and corporate events in Cologne and in the most important markets around the world. Its portfolio attracts over 54,000 exhibiting companies from 122 countries and approximately three million visitors from more than 200 nations.

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