



+++ ISO CONGRESS 2010 +++

Sourcing in China

Shanghai and Ningbo in southeast China were the scene of the 53rd Annual Congress of the International Shopfitting Organisation (ISO) in early June.

With some 40 participants from ten different countries, the ISO Annual Congress 2010 was well attended. The shopfitting companies took advantage of the occasion to establish contact with manufacturers in China and find an answer to the question what opportunities does cooperation with Chinese companies offer, and what are the prospects for it. Tours of companies in the Shanghai/Ningbo metropolitan area and a business seminar on the topic „Sourcing in China“ gave the congress participants practical insights into what is currently possible in China and what risks there are. Most of them also took the opportunity to visit the Expo in Shanghai.

The production companies toured are young companies which have managed to attain a respectable market position in their field in a relatively short time. Two examples are the firms Qumer and Meikolong. Qumer



▲ Visit to Nordic Industrial Park in Ningbo. The Scandinavian company enables foreign firms to enter the Chinese market

Furniture Co., founded in 1997, generates annual sales revenues of USD 70 million with a staff of 1200. On a plant area of currently 50,000 sqm the company produces mainly wooden furnishings for offices, hotels and restaurants, but also supplies shop fittings to retailers. The customers include Disney and Dolce & Gabbana, Carrefour and the Metro Group as well. Steel shelving and fixturing systems and wire goods are manufactured by Meikolong, which also is located in Shanghai. The company has three factories covering a total area of 390,000 sqm. For 2010 the company, which employees a workforce of 1600, expects to get USD 60 million in sales. The showroom presented products for the Chinese market: shelf systems for food and non-food retail, displays, shopping trolleys, and rolling containers. The

workmanship and the thickness of the sections used in the fixturing systems could not entirely convince the ISO members. Sales Manager May Wang of Meikolong explained that the quality standards in the Chinese market are less stringent than in Europe. The exacting customers in Europe include Carrefour, Metro, Tesco and Nike. For the German Kaufland Group Meikolong produces shopping trolleys; Lidl takes shelf systems. With a high input of human labour power, Chinese shopfitting enterprises, this is the upshot of the company tours, are very well able to manufacture products for the European market too. The low labour costs in China are an important factor for the international competitiveness of the companies, which make do without computer-controlled production lines or industrial robots.

▼ Pudong, Shanghai's business centre, by night





▲ Shopping mall Wanda Plaza in Ningbo

The exact definition of a quality standard and comprehensive quality inspections before the container ship leaves the Chinese port are indispensable at least in the initial phase of business relations.

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+++ EUROSHP 2011 +++

Meeting Point EuroShop

At the 2011 EuroShop the International Shopfitting Organisation ISO will again be present with its ISO Meeting Point – as meeting place, exhibition area and communication centre. ISO Secretary General Preben Bailey invites ISO members to participate. As in 2008 a highlight of the ISO appearance at the show will be the presentation of the ISO Awards.

From the viewpoint of the International Shopfitting Organisation, with members from 20 countries, EuroShop is the most important trade show of our industry worldwide. The coming EuroShop from 26 February through 2 March 2011 in Düsseldorf is a particularly important event once again because it will show in the aftermath of a major financial and economic crisis how things are going to continue for our industry. And they will continue!

Many companies really did not have economic problems, but suffered the effects of a certain panic-mongering. Many financial institutions cut off credit and stopped the realisation of quite a few really promising projects also in the retail sector. As we see it, the crisis is over, but we will be

feeling its repercussions for a number of years to come.

The majority of retail companies were hesitant to invest in the past three years even though consumers have been anything but resistant. That is why new retail concepts, new ideas, designs and business formats are in demand, for which the 2011 EuroShop is the right place at the right time.

Internet and emails have greatly facilitated business communication and made many a business trip for the purpose of personal discussion unnecessary – and at the same time made the importance of personal meetings more compelling. Electronic portraits and electronic communication will never be able to substitute for direct personal contact – one more reason why the 2011 EuroShop is so important. ISO and EuroShop too mainly are about meeting people.

As at the last EuroShop in 2008, the ISO Awards for the best trade show presentations again will be presented in 2011 in the three categories „Best Idea“, „Best Stand Design“ and „Best Product Presentation“. 92 exhibiting firms competed for the awards in 2008. The jury was made up of prominent ISO members. Since the prizes will be awarded on the evening of the second day of the show, Sunday, 27 February 2011, there is guaranteed to be a lot of hectic but creative activity in making the selections. The awards will be presented by ISO President Francois Mathéron from the French shopfitting organisation CFA. At the awards ceremony in 2008, which took place during an evening champagne party at the ISO Meeting Point, 120 participants applauded the proud winners. The big enterprises among the ISO members have already booked stand space at the 2011 EuroShop – some of them more than they did in 2008. The small and medium-size member companies either can go for a joint stand or show what they have at the ISO Meeting Point. ISO offers its members small, individual stand areas there on attractive terms. All those not exhibiting can nonetheless profit from the lounge of the ISO Meeting Point. They can arrange to meet there with suppliers, customers, colleagues and competitors, enjoy a drink and do what's most important: talk shop.

At the ISO Meeting Point one can meet industry representatives from all over the world. ISO counted 3000 visitors in 2008. We hope to be able to welcome you, too, in 2011.

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▼ The ISO Award winners at EuroShop 2008 (from top to bottom): Best Product Presentation: Zumtobel, Best Stand Design: Euro Display, Best Idea: Schweizer Ladenbau

