

Shining with purpose!

There is a reason why 15th anniversaries are usually depicted by crystals as they symbolise clarity of purpose, illuminated by values of the organization, and the beauty of achieving milestones together. This is the spirit behind Messe Muenchen India's Crystal Anniversary celebrations as it commemorates 15 years of excellence in the trade fairs industry

The global exhibitions business is witnessing an interesting inflection point after the pandemic-induced hiatus, and the Indian market is particularly vibrant due to growing consumer demand and a renewed policy focus towards domestic manufacturing. These are only a few of the tailwinds propelling expansion of Messe Muenchen India's trade fairs in recent times. For instance, the recently concluded electronica India and productronica India 2022 witnessed a 25% increase in domestic participation, while IFAT India 2022 witnessed 35% growth on the same metric over the previous year.

The 15-year journey of Messe Muenchen India is marked by such incremental growth over the years, resulting in radical growth for its customers in the various industries that it serves. With 20 trade fairs covering diverse industry clusters, Messe Muenchen India has crafted its unique journey by constantly innovating in response to customers' needs. No stranger to challenging times, Messe Muenchen India launched its first show for the electronics industry amidst fallout from the global economic downturn in 2008-09. Still, the company thrived and laid the foundations for strong trade fair brands in the years to come. Following the existential threat presented by Covid-19, Messe Muenchen India responded in two critical ways. Firstly, it strategically adopted digital channels to enhance its face-to-face business. And secondly, but more importantly, the company refocused on its vision, mission, and core values of trust, team spirit, craftsmanship, and entrepreneurship.

Starting small, dreaming big

Enabling meaningful handshakes and unlocking business opportunities is much more than a purpose statement for Messe Muenchen India. From its earliest days to its current form, it has prioritised customer centricity and higher value creation for all its stakeholders. Some of the company's best ideas and innovations have resulted from being vigilant to its customers' needs in response to changing industry dynamics. For example, Messe Muenchen India's exhibitions are well-known for their buyer-seller forums which bring together buyers' needs and exhibitors' solutions in a focussed environment that facilitates high-value deals and real business.

After surviving the storms of the initial five years, Messe Muenchen India embarked on an ambitious growth path until 2020. The company improved its sales strategy, increased marketing spends, built several strategic partnerships, and focussed sharply on improving customer ROI. The central mantra has always been to stay connected with customers' needs and the business will look after itself.

By the end of 2019, Messe Muenchen India had 17 exhibitions in the Indian market, with many brands growing to 4-5X their launch size. Having tasted success with several geo-cloned shows, it outperformed the market with 20-30% year-on-year growth. The company was even top ranked in 2019 in terms of gross space, as per a market study by the Indian

Exhibition Industry Association (IEIA). Thus, the company set itself a big hairy audacious goal of being valued at Rs. 1 billion by 2020.

Purpose-driven business

Face-to-face interactions and handshakes are an essential part of the trade fairs business model, and Messe Muenchen India ideated on how best to add greater value to these interactions, whether online or offline. That's when the mission of 'to enable meaningful handshakes; to unlock business opportunities' was articulated. Through its content-focused conferences, buyer-seller meets, and networking opportunities, in addition to displays of technologies and solutions, the company strives to create well-researched, vibrant, and energetic marketplaces that facilitate immediate business as well as long-term partnerships.

As the company's manifesto says, "Our purpose articulates why we exist as an organization. This is our North Star and helps us determine the direction to take in ambiguous business scenarios. Our core purpose flows from a set of unwavering beliefs that we have about our industry and our organization. Our mission includes the long-term business objectives that we are striving to achieve. This will be the foundation for our short term and medium-term goals."

About its core values and guiding principles, the manifesto says, "Our values define how we conduct ourselves not just when all is calm but also in times of adversity. These are common behaviours that we practice and want to get better at practicing in our organization. Our workplace practices and rituals are derived from our values, thus making them liveable and real across the organization. As Messe Muenchen India team members, it is our responsibility to reinforce them day in and day out. We will drive into the future whilst espousing our values of Trust, Team Spirit, Craftsmanship and Entrepreneurship."

Embracing digital thinking

The pandemic experience taught the company that while online platforms cannot replace physical interactions, it has the potential to improve customer experience manyfold. Thus, the company's digital department was established, resulting in its in-house online exhibition platform called Expoville which went on to host India's largest b2b online expo called the Festival of Business. Today, digital thinking plays a very important role in Messe Muenchen India's strategic plans and forms one of the key elements of its three pillars called purpose, people, and process. It also developed a central platform called 'MMI Connect' offering constructive solutions for networking and brand engagement.

Keep calm and focus on customer centricity

Technology plays a crucial role in helping organisers design a holistic experience for visitors and exhibitors. Thus, the company has adopted increased digitisation of internal operations to fully leverage the power of automation and improve customer experience by reducing turnaround times. Customer experience before, during and after each trade fairs is very important and measuring these outcomes through NPS is something the company is passionately working towards.

Due to their compliance with EU's data privacy laws, Messe Muenchen India avoids invasive technologies that build on visitors' personal information. However, it uses various technology tools to develop experiences that respect visitors' time invested with us. And this has an

immediate impact on the exhibitor and helps him to strategize which segment should be placed where and why.

To mark their 15th Anniversary, the company celebrated all these successes and innovations as well as its team members, partners, and customers at a special felicitation ceremony in Mumbai. (Perhaps share pics of 3rd Nov function). **To understand the sentiment behind this occasion, Bhupinder Singh, CEO, Messe Muenchen India, tells us why this is significant and what's more exciting in the pipeline.**

What is the significance of this Crystal Anniversary celebration?

We want to use this occasion to express gratitude to all the people who have contributed towards this journey. From our team members in India and the management in Germany to our customers, industry partners, vendors, and suppliers, we want to recognise each one's role, express gratitude, and recommit ourselves to the business of enabling meaningful handshakes and unlocking business opportunities for the industries we serve through our trade fairs.

Messe Muenchen is one of the most profitable and successful trade fair companies globally, but its real strength lies in its people. We have received tremendous support from the Munich headquarters throughout our 15-year journey but especially during the challenging past few years. Coming to our Indian clients and partners, we are grateful for their constant trust and support. We are confident of more exciting partnerships and more business in the coming years.

Tell us about these exciting developments at Messe Muenchen India over the next few months.

After a successful series of shows until September this year, we are now looking forward to drink technology India, PACKMACH Asia Expo, and World Tea & Coffee Expo 2022 in December, followed by our flagship trade fair for the construction equipment industry — bauma CONEXPO India 2023 in January next year. This show will showcase pioneering construction technologies in response to India's aggressive infrastructure development plans.

We are also thrilled to expand into South Africa with three shows — air cargo Africa, analytica Anacon Africa, and IFAT Africa. To accelerate our growth momentum, Messe Muenchen India has taken over the management of these shows from Messe Muenchen South Africa. While continuing to serve the best interests of the Indian market, our foray into South Africa is a way of scaling up our business by leveraging on the things we do best—organizing marketplaces, curating conferences, and driving more value for all our customers and partners.

What's your personal story with Messe Muenchen India?

I started as a project director when the company launched in 2007 and was promoted to Deputy CEO in 2013. I am truly overwhelmed by the scale and impact of our business which has been achieved through team spirit, trust, craftsmanship, and entrepreneurship. Like most enterprises, we started out with six team members in a small office in Mumbai, and we're glad to see our team size grow to nearly 80 members and 20 trade fairs across multiple industries. None of that could have been achieved without the steady support and trust of our global team and Indian partners, and we want to celebrate these relationships on the occasion of our Crystal Anniversary. To sum up our journey in one word: Gratitude.

