

Exhibitions in Belgium

2007 - ...

Today's market perspectives

What are Belgium's market perspectives in the various segments of the exhibition industry ?

- 1 Market size and evolution for **public shows**
- 2 Market size and evolution for **national tradeshow**s
- 3 Development of **international tradeshow**s
- 4 Perspectives for **exhibition centres**

Which ingredients are required to fulfill Belgium's true potential as an exhibition destination ?

- 5 More **creativity** in differentiating show concepts from competition
- 6 Upgrade of **pricing** and revenue level to European averages
- 7 **Bridge gaps** with other MICE formats

1 What are Belgium's market perspectives for public shows ?

Facts on the Plus side

- > Small Belgium manages to concentrate 10 mio inhabitants within a 200 km radius – great for national shows
- > High purchase power, high level of education
- > Good communications, roads, transport, media, plenty of venues

Facts on the Minus side

- > Population doesn't grow / gets older / younger generations are less "fair" minded and have high expectations
- > Pressure from alternative live experience formats (retail outlets and malls, events, leisure) on traditional public fairs
- > 3 regions, 2 cultures : complex campaigns and high marketing cost

1 What are Belgium's market perspectives for public shows ?

Effects

- n Undefined broad national "Fairs" are endangered species
- n A public show without the "Experience" factor won't match the retail and leisure alternatives
- n Cultural patchwork creates demand for regional shows; regional markets and venue availability allow sizeable regional shows
- n Public wants exciting events but exhibitors want R.O.I. : events that will last and grow are therefore lifestyle or **"experience" type events but where visitors actually buy and exhibitors actually sell.**

2 What are Belgium's market perspectives for national tradeshow's ?

Facts on the Plus side

- > Belgium is one of Europe's strong regions economically – a sizeable local market deserving to be served by its own tradeshow's
- > Demographics have generated a very dense local retail, services and foodservices network

Facts on the Minus side

- > Industries move away from Belgium to low wages countries
- > Traveling gets easier everyday – key visitors go to world shows abroad
- > Exhibiting gets more expensive everyday – exhibitors can't afford massive stand investments in both Cologne and Brussels anymore
- > Exhibitors are representative companies, importers and wholesalers, not the production and brands themselves

2 What are Belgium's market perspectives for national tradeshow's ?

Effects

- n Belgian exhibitors have less grip on their own marketing money today
- n Industrial / Technical tradeshow's on national Belgian level are no match to the international ones in neighboring countries
- n Belgium being still a sizeable market, industries are served by less costly, sales-oriented regional trade events
- n The less consolidated retail and services universe in Belgium is still of a sufficient size to justify large national events, but these events also will have to offer **cost conscious, sales-oriented show formats of strictly national or regional ambition**

3 What are Belgium's market perspectives for international tradeshow's ?

Facts on the Plus side

- > Belgium and Brussels are a world level decision making centre
- > Belgium is not Germany, not France, and not UK : Belgium has no strong national identity – very neutral.
- > Belgium and Brussels are a fun and friendly destination
- > Good and affordable exhibition infrastructure and services, accessibility and communications
- > Brussels enjoys strong success in other MICE areas (meetings...)

Facts on the Minus side

- > Lack of strong local industrial/economical hinterland that could justify and spearhead leading international tradeshow's to choose Belgium
- > Absence so far of world level exhibition organisers
- > Perception of complexity of cultural / regional puzzle
- > Typical Belgian "smiling underdog" attitude...

3 What are Belgium's market perspectives for international tradeshow s ?

Effects

- n Undoubtedly strong potential of Belgium as a destination for leading international tradeshow s
- n Current Belgian calendar of international tradeshow s, although nice, does not match potential
- n Creation / arrival of more sizeable and international organisers/venue owners could be determinant in changing that gradually
- n More links with meeting industry, more intermediate formats combining expo and meeting could help the exhibition industry benefit from Belgium's key position in the MICE world.
- n Shear weight of big industries in Germany/France/UK/Italy will keep leading large shows in those countries. Belgium's market for international trade shows therefore lies in **highly specialised niche events of a mixed "convention" type.**

4 What are Belgium's market perspectives for exhibition centres ?

Facts on the Plus side

- > Wide choice of venues within short distance of each other
- > Conveniently located for big markets (D, NL, FR)
- > Surface attractively priced to European standards
- > Good level of services in choice/quality/pricing

Facts on the Minus side

- > Overall surface not tremendous – 5 largest Belgian venues together are smaller than any 1 of the German top - 5 venues
- > Lack of decent convention facilities in most Belgian cities
- > Low hall rental pricing level
- > Peak periods saturated

4 What are Belgium's market perspectives for exhibition centres ?

Effects

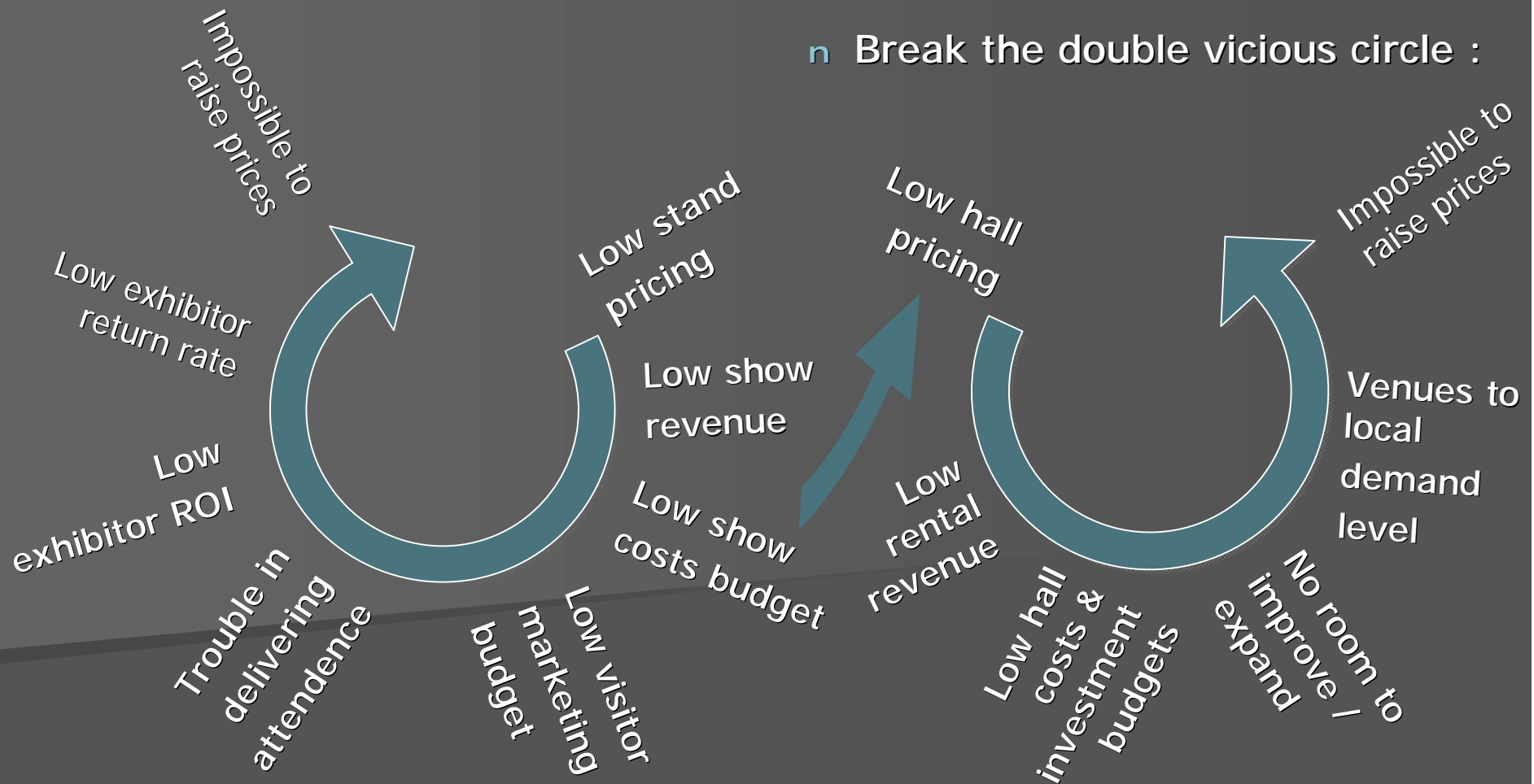
- n Unlike surrounding countries' overcapacity, there is currently a good match of hall surface with demand...
- n ...but unless local organisers get **more flexible on peak periods**, shortage of good slots will require investment in more m²
- n Exhibition halls investments are blocked by low ROI, which in turn is due to **below average hall surface rental pricing**
- n Belgium's attractiveness as an international trade show destination and overall good infrastructure can only materialize – to the benefit of all - into more/new international tradeshows by foreign organisers...
- n ... if local organisers and hall owners understand the difference and get **more flexible on theme protection**

5 What creativity is required to fulfill Belgium's true potential as an exhibition destination ?

- n No need to try to run "me too" international tradeshows that will not be able to compete with Germany's Weltmessen or France's "Foire Mondiales" > we have to identify the **future specialised niches**
- n Not a chance to beat Ikea or Eurodisney with rows of stands boarding endless aisles > we need to bring **exciting events** to the spoiled Belgian public
- n No use to try to impress with the size of our 100.000 m² max venues as compared to larger, newer infrastructures abroad > why not use our real strength instead, which is the **destination** ?

6 Why do we need to upgrade pricing to fulfill Belgium's potential as an exhibition destination ?

Break the double vicious circle :



6 Why do we need to upgrade pricing to fulfill Belgium's potential as an exhibition destination ?

Breaking the double (venues / exhibitions) vicious circle by working together on upgrading the overall pricing level on the Belgian market is **to the benefit of all** :

- n Revenue increase for **organisers** and **hall owners**
- n Better show marketing creates a better ROI for **exhibitors**
- n Increased show and venue budgets lead to additional demand to, and revenue for, the **service providers**

Adequate pricing and revenue for all transform the vicious circle into a virtuous one by giving **investment confidence** which in turn brings **more shows with more exhibitors into better venues**

7 Why bridge gaps with the MICE industry to fulfill Belgium's potential as an exhibition destination ?

- n The Meetings industry is **more destination driven** than the exhibition industry; and Belgium's attractiveness as a destination is a proven fact.
- n The Meetings industry is a success story in Belgium, achieving more **international status** than the exhibition industry.
- n The meetings industry is **niche organized** by nature and anticipates market evolution faster and earlier than tradeshow repeating each other year after year
- n The meetings industry involves **longer stays** from their attendees, with a higher economic return

7 Why bridge gaps with the MICE industry to fulfill Belgium's potential as an exhibition destination ?

- n Content only can't live without the financial income generated by tradeshows, and tradeshows can't live without **value adding content** in addition to the exhibitors' stands – a clear message from its visitors.
- n Meetings come and go, the additional tradeshow can stay or even help the meetings to stay themselves ; exhibitions are **longer term business**

All in all, specialised tradeshows and meetings are a very powerful and complementary combination to **boost Belgium as a destination for more international trade shows in the coming years.**

To sum it up : where goes / should go Belgium as an exhibition country in the coming years ?

<i>Same or less</i>	<i>More or better</i>
Less big, traditional, national <u>public exhibitions</u>	More creatively conceived <u>sales oriented</u> , enjoyable, regional public <u>events</u>
Less single <u>national tradeshow</u> s	More <u>networks</u> of proximity <u>sales events</u> with clear return for the exhibitors' money
Few big leading <u>international tradeshow</u> s	Increased number of trendsetting, specialised international <u>niche events</u> of the <u>convention</u> type – using destination Belgium as a sales tool
No real need for more <u>exhibition venue</u> surface...	But at more <u>coherent prices</u> , with more <u>flexibility</u> in calendars and in theme protection

« Belgium is a dream destination not only for the meetings industry, but also for the exhibition industry. A fine infrastructure and top services, multitalented and multicultural people, a strategic position...

With the needed flexibility, with joined efforts to widen the financial basis of the industry, with sharp creativity and with a clear focus on promising market segments that fit us like a glove, Belgium will be able to grow its exhibition industry well above average European growth figures in the coming years... »

Thank you.