

INTERVIEW

4 May 2020

“The opinions of our customers are important to us!”

- **Interview with Petra Wolf, Member of the Management Board and head of Expo & Conference, NürnbergMesse GmbH**

As the world’s leading exhibition for refrigeration technology, Chillventa is the central, worldwide meeting place for the refrigeration, air-conditioning, ventilation and heat pump community. In her interview, Petra Wolf, member of the Management Board of NürnbergMesse, provides insights into the current situation of Chillventa and the effects of the coronavirus pandemic on trade fairs. She describes how important it is, precisely now, to maintain an intensive dialog with customers and learn their opinions.

Ms. Wolf, you recently assumed responsibility for Chillventa as Member of the Management Board in these exceedingly difficult times. What challenges must you as a trade fair organiser and NürnbergMesse as a trade fair company confront?

Petra Wolf: “The worldwide trade fair business is being buffeted by rough seas. I think this metaphor describes the situation very well. Nearly 2,400 exhibitions have been cancelled worldwide. In Germany alone, it has been necessary to cancel or postpone more than 469 exhibitions; for us at the Exhibition Centre Nuremberg, the number is around 20. This has never happened in the history of national and international exhibitions, nor to us in Nuremberg. On 15 April 2020, for example, the Association of the German Trade Fair Industry (AUMA, Ausstellungs- und Messe-Ausschuss der Deutschen Wirtschaft e.V.) reported that trade fair cancellations in Germany could lead to losses of EUR 9.3 billion for the overall economy. 76,000 jobs would be affected, EUR 1.5 billion in tax revenue lost. This is a heavy blow to the trade fair industry and to the economy in general, especially for those who are directly connected to this industry and depend on trade fairs, including stand construction companies, service partners of the trade fair companies, restaurateurs and hoteliers, to name only a few.”

Ideelle Träger

Honorary Sponsors

Air conditioning and Refrigeration
European Association (AREA) Brussels,
Rixensart, Belgium

Association of European Refrigeration
Component Manufacturers (ASERCOM),
Brussels, Belgium

Bundesfachschule Kälte-Klima-Technik,
Maintal/Niedersachsen

Bundesindustrieverband Technische
Gebäudeausrüstung e.V. (BTGA), Bonn

Bundesinnungsverband des Deutschen
Kälteanlagenbauerhandwerks (BIV),
Bonn

Bundesverband Wärmepumpe (BWP) e.V.,
Berlin

Deutscher Kälte- und Klimatechnischer
Verein (DKV) e.V., Hannover

EPEE European Partnership for Energy
and Environment, Brussels, Belgium

eurammon, Frankfurt

Exhibitors Group/Ausstellerkreis
Chillventa

Fachverband Allgemeine Lufttechnik
im VDMA, Frankfurt

Fachverband Gebäude-Klima e.V. (FGK),
Bietigheim-Bissingen

Institut für Luft- und Kältetechnik (ILK),
Dresden

Test- und Weiterbildungszentrum
Wärmepumpen und Kältetechnik (TWK),
Karlsruhe

TÜV SÜD Industrie Service Center of
Competence für Kälte- und Klimatechnik,
München

Verband Deutscher Kälte-Klima-
Fachbetriebe e.V. (VDKF), Bonn

Zentralverband Kälte Klima
Wärmepumpen e.V. (ZVKKW), Bonn

Veranstalter

Organizer

NürnbergMesse GmbH
Messezentrum
90471 Nürnberg
Germany
T +49 9 11 86 06-0
F +49 9 11 86 06-82 28
chillventa@nuernbergmesse.de
www.chillventa.de

Vorsitzender des Aufsichtsrates

Chairman of the Supervisory Board

Albert Füracker, MdL
Bayerischer Staatsminister der
Finanzen und für Heimat
Bavarian State Minister of Finance
and Regional Identity

Geschäftsführer

CEOs

Dr. Roland Fleck, Peter Ottmann

Registergericht

Registration Number

HRB 761 Nürnberg

How do you assess the current situation of the trade fair industry?

“Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we are confronted with major, unprecedented challenges, which are requiring us to make new and difficult decisions every day, and not only as trade fair organisers. We are currently experiencing great uncertainty and we are constantly hearing questions from many sectors about how, when, and whether events can be held. Here in Bavaria, large events have been banned until the end of August. As you can imagine, this is a matter of serious concern for us and our customers, especially when it comes to autumn events like Chillventa. Nevertheless, Chillventa continues to develop at a very good level. As of today, 4 May 2020, more than 800 exhibitors from around the world have committed to participate: That is the same level as at the same time in 2018. That is a great sign in these difficult times.”

Do you see light at the end of the coronavirus tunnel?

“We are unable to tell what will happen next, but we hope very much that we can hold trade fairs again in September. As industry and communication platforms, trade fairs in particular will be essential for quickly and sustainably reopening and growing the economy in the autumn. We quickly grasped the importance of talking with our customers and holding intensive discussions with them. We communicate closely with our highly dedicated Chillventa Advisory Board, as well as many Chillventa exhibitors, associations, and institutions. This gives us a nuanced sense of sentiment in the industry.”

With whom else are you speaking?

“Together with our Chillventa Advisory Board, we quickly agreed that it is essential to ask all our customers, including both exhibitors and visitors, for their opinions. The Exhibition Advisory Board is composed of exhibiting companies and institutions and is a representative cross section of the entire industry in all segments of Chillventa. (www.chillventa.de/partners). In addition, of course, we are in close communication with our subsidiaries in Brazil, China, India, Italy, North America and Austria, as well as our exceptionally large international network of more than 100 representatives around the world. This too gives us a very good and regular sense of what our exhibitors and trade visitors are thinking.”

How will you go about doing this?

“We will contact all registered exhibitors and visitors of Chillventa 2018 and ask them what they think. In the coming weeks, we will ask our customers to answer our questions about holding Chillventa. We would appreciate it if your readers would participate in the survey as well: www.ntgt.de/a/s.aspx?s=417065X80828929X41122. Together with the Chillventa Advisory Board, we have given thought to the question of how we think Chillventa can proceed. We will not hold an event against the wishes of the industry, but only with and for the community. The results will serve as a gauge for our decisions related to Chillventa, which we will make in consultation with our Advisory Board in the best interests of the refrigeration, air-conditioning, ventilation and heat pump community.”

How can Chillventa be held in these times?

“The Chillventa to be held in October 2020 will certainly be different from what we are accustomed to. The worldwide travel restrictions could possibly still be in effect in the autumn. In all probability, Chillventa will be considerably more national in terms of both exhibitors and visitors. Moreover, we will need to get used to keeping physical distance and wearing mouth-and-nose protection. In any case, we will heed and implement all recommendations of the government authorities, the WHO, and the Robert Koch Institute. We are in close communication with all relevant ministries and authorities and thus we will be able to react quickly.

In addition, we will implement an extensive safety and hygiene plan to protect all our guests at the exhibition. This plan covers a wide range of measures from mandatory facemasks to hand hygiene. Managing crowd density will also be an important aspect for maintaining sufficient distancing. We have already developed new concepts for this and will communicate them shortly. (www.chillventa.de/measures). Finally, it cannot be ruled out that Chillventa cannot be held this year due to official restrictions. We have also included this contingency in our considerations. For this case, we are already working on digital solutions for Chillventa and the Chillventa CONGRESS, although we do not think that a virtual trade fair is a substitute or alternative for face-to-face interactions.”

About Petra Wolf

In her function as Member of the Management Board and head of Expo & Conference NürnbergMesse, Petra Wolf is responsible for the successful Chillventa as the leading international, refrigeration and air-conditioning exhibition. This also includes the worldwide refrigeration, air-conditioning, ventilation and heat pump community. In addition to Chillventa, other events include the European Heat Pump Summit, ACREX India, and REFCOLD INDIA. She is also responsible for the Building & Construction Cluster. This includes numerous leading international trade fairs and product families such as the combined trade fairs FENSTERBAU FRONTALE and HOLZ-HANDWERK, as well as Chillventa, European Heat Pump Summit, Stone+tec, GaLaBau, Feuertrutz, and eltec.

Contacts for the press and media

Bertold Brackemeier and Jasmin McNally

T +49 9 11 86 06-85 21

F +49 9 11 86 06-12 85 21

jasmin.mcnally@nuernbergmesse.de

All press releases, further information, photos and videos are available at:
www.chillventa.de/en/news

Follow us on **Twitter**: @chillventa

Follow us on **Facebook**: @chillventa

Up-to-date information on the industry is also provided in the
Chillventa news ticker:

www.chillventa.de/en/news/news-ticker