

Messe Frankfurt raises the bar for growth

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Messe Frankfurt has left the difficult and demanding last three years behind it and is now enjoying both qualitative and quantitative growth in Germany and abroad. By the end of financial year 2023, approximately 340 events will have been held worldwide under the Messe Frankfurt Group umbrella, with more than 84,000 exhibitors and an estimated four million visitors. After a strong core business in 2023 with sales in excess of €600 million, the company is planning further growth in 2024 – a year in which a relatively high number of events are scheduled – and expects sales to be comparable with the previous record year 2019. Messe Frankfurt will increase its international competitiveness by investing in its worldwide core business, modern technology and sustainable event management.

On presenting the Group's preliminary figures for financial year 2023, Wolfgang Marzin, President and Chief Executive Officer of Messe Frankfurt, stressed: "Messe Frankfurt is back with growth and new perspectives. The Group is standing on its own feet again financially and is both profitable in itself and of great importance to the overall economy. Today, we are already looking forward with great optimism to a strong 2024 for both Group and guest events and expect sales to be on a par with record year 2019 (€736 million) or maybe even higher. At the same time, our events are not immune to the possible consequences of new geopolitical risks and the negative effects on the economy and the individual sectors."

Stephanie Wüst, Head of the City of Frankfurt's Department of Economy, Legal Affairs and City Marketing and Chairperson of Messe Frankfurt's Supervisory Board, was also delighted at the Group's performance this year: "Messe Frankfurt has emerged from the difficult pandemic period and is returning to its former strength. With the right strategy and a vision based on sustainability, the Group is a strong driving force at its locations around the world. For us as shareholders, it is important to give Messe Frankfurt our full support, for example when it is strengthening its Frankfurt base for the future and securing new events for Frankfurt."

Growth drivers: worldwide core business, state-of-the-art technology and sustainable event management

Even though a relatively small number of events were scheduled as part of the rotation for this financial year, around 340 events will still have been held under the Messe Frankfurt umbrella by the end of 2023, with more than 84,000 exhibitors and four million visitors. 81 percent of exhibitors and 54 percent of visitors at Group events held at the company's Frankfurt base came from outside Germany. In keeping with the successful operating business, Messe Frankfurt expects consolidated sales for financial year 2023 to be more than €600 million.

45 percent of Group sales were generated outside Germany in the reporting year. For over 36 years, Messe Frankfurt has been active in international markets with its diversified overseas strategy. The company is stepping up efforts to further develop its international portfolio, which harbours enormous potential. Around 30 events are scheduled to make their debut between the beginning of financial year 2023 and 2025.

As well as taking its worldwide core business to the next level, Messe Frankfurt will be investing more in modern technologies and in sustainable event management and using this to strengthen its international competitive position. Back in 2022, Messe Frankfurt had already decided of its own accord to introduce the environmental management system EMAS. Wolfgang Marzin continued: “The EMAS certification that we received a few days ago is a key achievement for our business. It is just one of the numerous voluntary commitments and sustainable measures with which we have been actively engaged for years. EMAS will also help us to meet the challenges of the new EU regulations and the sustainability reporting requirements that this entails. We are also deriving valuable information from our extensive base data, which allows us to move step by step towards our goal of having a green event business. Sustainability in the company goes hand in hand with sustainability at our flagship events. Now that we are financially independent again, we are actively tackling the digital transformation process in the Group and plan to complete many parts of this by 2026. With this, we are starting the greatest modernisation project in Messe Frankfurt’s company history.”

With global Group standards and the fast availability of knowledge about customers and markets, Messe Frankfurt wants to increase its efficiency in managing its Group activities around the world. At the same time, it is laying the foundations for additional data-based B2B marketing services that are provided all year round. Detlef Braun, Member of the Executive Board of Messe Frankfurt, said: “We are a global marketing service provider and are currently in a phase in which we are developing from a trade fair organiser to a provider of an entire category of B2B marketing solutions. With events that are centred on face-to-face business interaction, we offer an established range of instruments that not even a pandemic was able to destroy. Trade fairs are the analogue winners of digitalisation and successful trade fair brands are also the basis for new digital products and services.”

Messe Frankfurt’s brands are back, stronger and more resilient than ever. In many cases, the key performance indicators at events around the world are pointing to growth. And the guest event business – Messe Frankfurt’s second core area of expertise – has recorded a high level of bookings in 2023, with some 220 events being held at the company’s Frankfurt base. As Uwe Behm, Member of the Executive Board of Messe Frankfurt, emphasised: “Our aim is to hold even more events on the exhibition grounds – using the eastern and western sections simultaneously for different events will play a more prominent role in our marketing. As part of our digital transformation process, we will also have new design and service options for guest events and will continue to expand them.”

Financial year 2024 is looking very promising given the number and diversity of events throughout the world. As well as a series of Group flagship events in close succession, the company’s Frankfurt base will be playing host to new guest organisers and themes in 2024. These include trade fairs like Pest Protect, Natural Disasters Expo Europe, Passenger Terminal EXPO and the Impact Festival, Europe’s largest B2B trade fair for sustainable innovations. And Messe Frankfurt is also building up its workforce by taking on new employees and offering more and more training opportunities. At present, the

company has around 30 trainees and dual study programme students in different training occupations in Frankfurt alone.

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