

Akiko Ohara to become General Manager of Messe Düsseldorf Japan Ltd in Tokyo



For the first time Düsseldorf's trade fair company is appointing a woman to a senior management position at an international subsidiary

Atmosphere of trust continues in the market: Messe Düsseldorf Japan Ltd has been a reliable partner for 25 years

CEO Dornscheidt says: "We want to continue developing our events in Japan, move ahead with cooperative ventures and ensure continuity for our customers."

On 1 April 2019 Akiko Ohara (50) will be taking over as General Manager of Messe Düsseldorf Japan Ltd, where she will have the overall strategic and operational responsibility for Messe Düsseldorf's subsidiary in Tokyo. She will be the first woman at the highest management level of an international subsidiary of Messe Düsseldorf. Ohara is succeeding Dr Andreas Moerke (52), who, after 12 years in Japan, will be called back to a management position at the company's German home base from 1 August 2019. In Düsseldorf, he will be heading up New Business Development as well as ENERGY STORAGE EUROPE, the leading international trade fair for energy storage, and will therefore also be responsible for analysing and assessing other business areas of the company.

Over the next few years the Japanese subsidiary will focus on representing the head office in Düsseldorf and expanding its events and seeking new formats as well as becoming more international and increasing its market network through partnerships and cooperative ventures. "One point that was important to us in this appointment, is that our subsidiary should continue to be positioned as a reliable partner in the Japanese market and that there should be continuity," says Werner M. Dornscheidt, Chief Executive Officer of Messe Düsseldorf GmbH. And it's also important to strengthen any alliances that were concluded in the past, such as the strategic partnership with Japan's biggest business media group, Nikkei.

Made by Messe Düsseldorf: 25 years of collaboration in a spirit of trust

Messe Düsseldorf has been in the Japanese market since 1984 and has had its own

subsidiary in Tokyo since 1994. It provides local support for Japanese exhibitors and trade fair visitors, covering the full range of worldwide events run by the Messe Düsseldorf Group. The company provides its customers with a full range of services and information. “The foundation stone of all business is personal contacts,” says Dornscheidt. The presence and dedication of Messe Düsseldorf staff in Japan have enabled numerous Japanese companies to operate internationally, both in Germany and elsewhere. This is also why Dornscheidt sees Akiko Ohara as the best possible choice. After all she is regarded as a proven trade fair expert in the Japanese market, an outstanding networker who is full of new ideas.

Japanese network makes worthwhile contributions to events in Düsseldorf

Ms Ohara, who is Japanese, has a degree in sociology and can look back on over 20 years in the Japanese market, where she has gathered some outstanding knowledge in events and trade fairs. Moreover, she has gained insights into a variety of industries, particularly through the Japan Management Association. Having started in 1996, she has worked, for instance, in Human Resources Management, International Corporate Communication/Business Coordination and project management for B2B trade fairs. She has successfully led and moulded Techno-Frontier, the trade fair for electronic parts and devices, the Hotel and Restaurant Show and FOODEX JAPAN, the most important Japanese trade fair for food and beverages.

In 2018 ProWein Düsseldorf – the international trade fair for wines and spirits – acted as a project partner at FOODEX, where it set up a ProWein & Champagne Lounge. This cooperation between the Japan Management Association as the organisers of FOODEX and Messe Düsseldorf as the organisers of ProWein enriched FOODEX, and indeed not only its wine segment. In particular, trade visitors had an opportunity to obtain comprehensive, first-hand information about ProWein in Düsseldorf. At the same time, the involvement with FOODEX gave traditional champagne manufacturers from France a good opportunity to introduce themselves to the Japanese market. Trade fair manager Dornscheidt describes FOODEX as the ideal platform to create and establish specific contacts in Japan, i.e. with importers, distributors, retailers and also representatives of the hotel and catering industry. From 17 to 19 March 2019 the 25th ProWein Düsseldorf had around 7,000 exhibitors from 67 countries and welcomed about 61,500 trade visitors from 142 countries. It has already set up successful satellite events in China and Singapore.

Positive feedback effects for Düsseldorf as a venue

Business activities in Japan are clearly having good feedback effects for the exhibition centre in Düsseldorf. In 2018 Japan accounted for 234 exhibitors, 4,686 square metres of net exhibition space and 4,538 trade visitors. Over the last 10 years the number of exhibitors has risen by 68%, net exhibition space by 57% and the number of visitors by 65%. In 2018 MEDICA was the trade fair with the largest number of Japanese exhibitors (85), the biggest net exhibition space (1,940 sqm) and the most Japanese visitors (1,721). COMPAMED came second with 67 Japanese exhibitors, and ProWein third with 27 exhibitors. After MEDICA, the trade fairs with the biggest amount of Japanese exhibition space were wire (680 sqm) and COMPAMED (649 sqm). In terms of visitor numbers, glasstec came second with 617 Japanese visitors, and wire came third with 518.

Good relationships in Japan are having a positive impact on Düsseldorf

About half of all Japanese companies and subsidiaries in Germany are based in North Rhine Westphalia. The trade fair city of Düsseldorf is among the most important centres of Japanese business activities in Europe. 405 Japanese companies are based here, while the wider region, North Rhine Westphalia, has 622, creating around 53,000 jobs in all. Moreover, Japanese businesses are continuing to be interested in Düsseldorf as a business venue. Year on year, the capital of North Westphalia attracts an average of 23 new Japanese companies. Half of North Rhine Westphalia's Japanese population live in Düsseldorf (i.e. about 7,600 of around 15,000). The importance of this business venue is reflected in numerous institutions that have their head offices here: the Japanese Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Düsseldorf Japanese Club, the German-Japanese Business Circle, the German-Japanese Society on the Lower Rhine, the Japanese General Consulate, the Japanese External Trade Organisation (JETRO) and the Japanese International School.

Number of characters: 6,740 (incl. spaces)

The Messe Düsseldorf Group*:

With a revenue of around EUR 290m in 2018, the Messe Düsseldorf Group has maintained its position as one of Germany's most successful trade fair companies. 26,800 exhibitors presented their products to 1.14m trade visitors at events in Düsseldorf last year. Compared with previous events, this was an increase in the numbers of both exhibitors and visitors. The Düsseldorf Exhibition Centre hosts around 50 trade fairs in five sectors of expertise: machinery, plants and equipment; the retail trade, trades and services; medicine and healthcare; lifestyle and beauty; and leisure. The trade fairs include 22 proprietary number-one trade fairs, as well as, currently, 15 robust partner and guest events. Also, its subsidiary Düsseldorf Congress holds around 2,800 conventions, corporate events, conferences and meetings, attracting around 640,000 delegates in all. In addition, the Messe Düsseldorf Group organises 70 proprietary events, participations and contracted events in other countries and is one of the leading export platforms in the world. The level of internationalism is particularly high for the capital goods trade fairs held by Messe Düsseldorf GmbH. In 2018, Messe Düsseldorf's proprietary events in machinery, plants and equipment attracted approx. 77% international exhibitors and 70% trade visitors from other countries. In all, Düsseldorf trade fairs were attended by customers from about 180 countries. The group runs a global network of sales offices in 141 countries (with 77 international offices), subsidiaries in 6 countries as well as several additional international affiliates.

* All figures are subject to final accounts.

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