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**PUBLIC RELATIONS WORK THROUGH EXHIBITIONS**

**GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THE TARGET GROUPS**

**- A CASE STUDY BY "INFORMATIONSKREIS KERNENERGIE" -**

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Dear chairman, ladies and gentlemen,

Public relations work through exhibitions and fairs: what does it entail ? Why in particular should we utilize these media ?

Let us look at the statistics. According to information from AUMA, the "Exhibition and Fair Committee of Germany's Economy", 873 fairs and exhibitions were organized worldwide in 1992, visited by 122 million people. Fairs and exhibitions of regional significance were not included in these figures. Within Germany, 102 such exhibitions and fairs took place, visited by approximately 9.6 million people. If we add approximately 120 regional exhibitions and 200 smaller exhibitions, the overall number of visitors is much larger. A comparison with former years reveals that the average annual number of visitors has risen since 1987 by 16.5 per cent.

Why do people go to fairs and exhibitions ? The general idea is that visitors to fairs have a definite interest into buying something. But if we analyse these visitors, another picture emerges: approximately every fifth visitor visits fairs with the intention of buying something. By far the larger share of visitors uses these events for general information purposes.

Who are these visitors and to which target groups do they belong ? The largest part, i.e. 36 per cent belong to the group of "self-employed businessmen, partners of companies and freelance professionals". 26 per cent of visitors are employees, craftsmen or similar, 19 per cent managers, directors, departmental managers or employees in top positions, 10 per cent managing directors, members of the board, senior officials and similar and 6 per cent apprentices, students or pupils. (These shares of visitors differ according to the subject of the exhibition). All these visitors of exhibitions are simultaneously representatives of those groups we want to reach:

- political and economic opinion-makers
- media representatives
- insiders
- young people and schoolchildren
- interested public.

Fairs and exhibitions also provide an ideal opportunity to contact these target groups directly. But how is this possible ?

Fairs and exhibitions are events during which several exhibitors of one or several branches of the economy exhibit and sell a more or less representative range of goods. Nowhere else do suppliers have the opportunity to offer their range of goods in such a direct and concentrated way and to establish a positive and trustworthy image at the same time.

The main point of our exhibition stand is the dialogue. We do not want to advise or persuade visitors. After thinking over the advantages and disadvantages, we rather give them the opportunity to establish their own opinion on the subject "peaceful utilization of nuclear energy". With various exhibits the visitor should be stimulated to express his opinion and begin a discussion with us. However, how does it work in individual cases ?

We work with several main foci of activity. Firstly, we provide demonstration tables to give the visitor the opportunity to inform himself on various aspects of nuclear energy. On fourteen display boards, the seven most controversial subjects on nuclear energy, discussed in public, are set out. All subjects are displayed on display boards adjacent to each other according to the principle: "there are two sides to each coin". As an example, the subject "radioactivity" has been picked out. Under the heading of the first display board is written: "It is the fact that..." the main emphasis being "radioactivity can endanger life". An explanatory text follows. Next to it on the right is the second display board: "But it is also a fact that...", followed by the emphasis: "Radioactivity can also save life". Again, an explanatory text follows. With this type of demonstration the visitors should realize that every activity includes advantages as well as disadvantages which have to be weighed against each other. They have to understand that one has to decide for or against one thing and so must also bear part of the consequences, resulting from this decision.

To clarify the subject "radioactivity" in particular, we installed a radiation measuring device on our exhibition stand. Visitors can measure various things in everyday use and request an explanation of how this radiation was caused.

Another exhibit on the subject "radioactivity" is the cloud chamber. The visitor has the opportunity to see natural radiation. The aim of this exhibit is to clarify that radioactivity is something natural, surrounding us daily.

The focal point of our exhibition stand is the video theatre. Visitors sit in front of a semi-permeable mirror wall behind which the film "Facts for our future" is shown on eight monitors, differing in size. On the one hand, the glass and mirror wall permits the observers to see the film and on the other hand see themselves within the reflecting mirror. This gives them the impression that they are part of the events in the film. The eight minute long film, which you will see shortly, shows the local and global effects of our current way of life and makes the observers aware that they are not only responsible for themselves but also for the environment which they helped to design.

To attract younger people in particular, we installed several computers on our exhibition stand, where they can run quiz programmes on the subject of "nuclear energy". If visitors give the right answers they receive a small prize.

We also supply interested visitors with extensive information material, mostly free of charge. I brought one example with me. It is our photo atlas "Nuclear Energy in Germany" which we offer in an English edition too, available in the foyer. But our main focus during fairs and exhibitions is not to distribute printed material. We are more interested in direct discussion with visitors. But a precondition is that there are enough qualified staff at the exhibition stand and that the members are able to answer visitors' questions. But each of them must also - and this is essential with this type of exhibition conception - be sensitive enough to give the visitor the impression that he or she understands and take seriously his moral conflict. It is not our aim to explain nuclear energy to laymen from a ivory tower position but to build up a one to one dialogue.

Thank you for your attention.

**Print material**

## **NUCLEAR ENERGY IN GERMANY**

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Nuclear energy can be discussed quite fiercely. The facts very often fall by the wayside. The escalation of the greenhouse effect as well as the emissions caused by burning fossil fuel has increased the number of advocates for the use of a present-day alternative, nuclear energy, which is clean and free of carbon dioxide. The utilization of wind and solar energy is progressing slower than expected.

This copiously illustrated book shows and explains the current situation of nuclear energy in the Federal Republik of Germany, not only in the old federal states, but also in the new ones.

A photographic circular tour starting at Brunsbüttel in the north leads across the country to Isar in the south and Greifswald in the east, showing cooling towers and reactor domes as well as how uranium pellets for the fuel rods are produced.

The book explains how remote control for a nuclear reactor works and, above all, shows the people living in the vicinity of nuclear power stations, in good neighbourliness and with the awareness that nuclear power has many good sides, which are only mentioned by few people, but whose benefits are exploited daily by everybody in our country. Using environment-friendly nuclear energy, our energy supply companies already provide one-third of the total of North-Germany's electricity consumption and two-thirds of Bavaria's. The operation, supply and maintenance of nuclear power-stations creates, maintains and secures thousands of jobs.

The Photo Atlas makes the fascinating world of nuclear energy accessible - from changing fuel in the reactor come to specimen testing in the laboratory, from the state-of-the-art control room to the fuel container in the air-cooled chamber of an intermediate depot.

Four included maps indicate the geographical positions of Germany's nuclear facilities and give information about opening times. A short glossary explains key-words from A to Z.

The photo atlas is directed at any interested person to give a first information about the peaceful use of nuclear energy in Germany or to prepare an excursion.

The book can be ordered by Informationskreis Kernenergie.