



# know now

Tips for using certified exhibition data

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## January 2018

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and certified data  
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## ■ Insight

# How are exhibition data certified?

Just about everything is certified these days, from new types of aircrafts to the processes behind services. But it's rare that users can find out exactly how this is done.

Certifications from FKM, however, are transparent because FKM's partners not only want to meet standards. They also want to gain their customers' confidence - confidence in the correctness and comparability of key exhibition data and visitor profile information.

Certification by FKM (Society for the Voluntary Control of Fair and Exhibition Statistics) basically consists of two steps. Step one is a 'walk-through' of the exhibition by a representative of the leading auditing company Ernst & Young, which is FKM's certifying body. This representative checks how the visitor entry system works, because physical presence is the sole criterion for counting visitors (and also exhibitors). Exhibition organisers have to demonstrate that visitors who purchased tickets or registered in advance actually arrived. This can be done by an electronic entry system, or manually by collecting ticket segments. In other words, people who wanted to attend a fair but do not show up are not included in FKM visitor statistics.

The auditor also observes whether the interviewers who carry out the FKM visitor surveys work correctly. The walk-through covers the exhibitors too, of course. The aim is to check whether stands have personnel in accordance with FKM rules, and whether joint stands and special shows accord with the organiser's layout plans.

Step two, which is the main part of the auditing work, starts later. A few weeks after the exhibition, auditors visit the offices of the organiser to check whether applications and confirmations are present for all the exhibitors announced, whether receipts match the visitor numbers announced and whether the results of the electronic entry system are plausible. These entry systems are of course also certified separately before being used.

How often do these audits take place? For exhibitions that are held once a year or every two years, they are done for every second fair. For fairs held on three-year cycles or more, they are done for every one. FKM's partners therefore invest a lot of time and money to give their customers useful – and trustworthy – data for selecting and planning their exhibitions.



## ■ News

## Certified exhibition data for planning purposes

### Key statistics on 211 German trade fairs in the 2016 FKM Report

The 2016 annual report from FKM provides certified data for companies to use when planning which trade fairs to attend. These exhibitor and visitor statistics plus visitor profile analyses for trade fairs held in 2016 were compiled with uniform standards, and are available online at: ► [fkm.de](http://fkm.de). Such data are also available for most of the exhibitions held in 2017. To mark the publication of the annual report, FKM Chairman Klaus Dittrich explained that »FKM data enable exhibitors and visitors to clearly identify how relevant a trade fair truly is for them. Above all, exhibitors can assess whether they will encounter their target groups.«

Last year 50 German organisers in the FKM had a total of 211 trade fairs certified by the Ernst & Young auditing company. In addition to basic data such as number of exhibitors, stand space and number of visitors, broken down into German and international categories, FKM provides profile data on trade and public visitors for 162 fairs, including region of origin, influence on purchasing decisions and professional status.

In addition to FKM's German members, its two guest members from abroad, namely, the Verona Exhibition Company and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, had 17 trade fairs certified. The **2016 FKM report** is available free of charge. It can be requested from FKM by e-mail at [info@fkm.de](mailto:info@fkm.de) or by fax at (030) 24 000-340.



## Nearly 60% of trade fair visitors are decision-makers

### FKM provides standardised visitor surveys online

Exhibitors at German trade fairs can reach a substantial number of trade visitors with decision-making capacities. Some 58% of trade visitors to international and national exhibitions have decisive or partial influence on purchasing or procurement decisions at their companies. This figure results from an analysis of 110 surveys of trade visitors to exhibitions in 2016 certified by FKM.

Surveys also show that another approximately 20% of trade visitors act in at least an advisory capacity. This group is also relevant to exhibitors, because they make an important contribution to group decisions from e.g. a user's perspective. All FKM-certified 2016 surveys of trade and public visitors are available in the trade fair database on the FKM website ► [fkm.de](http://fkm.de).

Surveys of trade visitors provide information about categories such as their areas of responsibility, economic sectors and regions of origin.

Surveys of public visitors provide information about categories such as their regions of origin, professional status and their buying and ordering capacities.

For more information about FKM, see the website at: ► [fkm.de](http://fkm.de).

### FKM knowhow Imprint

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We would like to thank the exhibition companies for providing us with pictures.

### FKM at a glance

- the only German body for certifying exhibition data
- 50 German organisers are partners of FKM
- standardised definitions
- standardised auditing procedures
- around 200 exhibitions per year are being certified, for 80% of the exhibitions, data on visitor structure as well
- Certification by Ernst & Young auditing company

## ■ Practice

## FKM visitor profiles: areas of responsibility

Visitors' areas of responsibility are one of the most interesting categories of trade fair statistics for exhibitors. As surveys have shown, nearly 70% of exhibitors consider this information to be important or very important, because it enables them to assess whether they can reach company representatives with the specific trade expertise. Data on visitors' main areas of responsibility also give them an idea of special preparations their stand personnel should make, and help them choose displays and design the types of communication at their stands. For example, they might be considering whether they will primarily be explaining their products or services with their exhibits, or whether they will also have frequent need of 'private spaces' for confidential negotiations.

Data on visitors' areas of responsibility can also show exhibitors that trade fairs for investment goods are attended not only by technical specialists and procurement managers, and that trade fairs for consumer goods are attended not only by purchasers. Instead, representatives of the relevant specialised departments are also involved in decision-making processes, especially when larger companies or special acquisition projects are involved.

Consumer goods fairs are also attended by sales and marketing experts in search of e.g. ideas on how to present goods in retail contexts. Shop designers gather inspiration from innovative stand set-ups. And many companies seeking to acquire investment goods also send the future users to trade fairs, because their specialised knowledge is frequently needed to assess the efficiency of, for example, new machinery when actually used at the plant. Exhibitors should therefore also be prepared to interact with members of these visitor groups, who play an important role in the market penetration process for products. If the standard range of choices does not cover some visitors' areas of responsibility for certain fairs, the organisers can also ask for visitors' professions.

In addition, a quality feature of nearly all German trade fairs is the high percentage of visitors who are board members, directors or managers – in other words, people who often initiate major changes in purchasing or procurement strategies. By the way, there is also an increasing tendency for managers and users from the same company to attend trade fairs together – the ideal constellation for rapid and reliable procurement decisions.



**FKM**  
Practice



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## ■ Lexicon

## What actually is ... an international trade fair?

Nearly every trade fair with a sense of self-worth uses the term 'international' in its advertising. Yet it is often unclear what this actually means. In concrete terms, how many exhibitors or visitors are needed to justify this attractive designation? Some organisers are of the opinion that two or three exhibitors should actually suffice.

Years ago FKM decided that if a trade fair wants to call itself »international«, then at least 10% of its exhibitors and 5% of its visitors should come from abroad. This definition is also based on the one used by the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry (UFI). The Association of the German Trade Fair Industry (AUMA) goes a step further. Not only must these percentages be met, but in absolute terms there also have to be at least 20 exhibitors and 100 trade visitors from abroad.

What is the reason for these seemingly picky criteria? The term »international« should not just be used for advertising purposes but also for orientation – for exhibitors, visitors and media representatives. Their points of view can differ widely. Visitors want to know whether they will find a significant number of foreign products, and not from importers but rather from the foreign companies themselves that also bring the corresponding consulting expertise. This is why companies whose products are presented by importers are not counted as international exhibitors. Conversely, exhibitors associate the term »international« with a minimum number of visitors from other countries, and not just a symbolic 1%. To accommodate both sides, therefore, there are two criteria: 10% of exhibitors and 5% of visitors from abroad.

If these percentages are certified by FKM, all the better. A visitor, after all, can get some idea of how many foreign exhibitors are present from the catalogue. But an exhibitor can hardly find information about where the visitors come from. If exhibitors are disappointed or even misled by organisers on this score, they generally tend not to return.

