

**Guide to a Successful Joint Fair Participation**  
**Case Study: Airport Cluster Finland at Inter Airport Europe 2011**

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<p>The purpose of this thesis was to produce a guide to a successful joint fair participation for the use of the commissioning organization Airport Cluster Finland, which exhibited at Inter Airport Europe 2011 with 12 of its member companies. The purpose of the guide was to analyze the joint fair participation at Inter Airport Europe 2011, present suggestions for improvement, and therefore help Airport Cluster Finland in the future joint fair participations.</p> <p>The theoretical framework was based on Kotler's (2006) traditional marketing mix and Lovelock's (2009) extended marketing mix for services. The focus was especially on the promotion component. In addition, the concepts of relationship marketing and branding were briefly discussed before finally focusing on trade fair intelligence.</p> <p>The research methodology during the study was qualitative. The research methods included a case study (Inter Airport Europe 2011) and observation during the event. In addition eight interviews with the Airport Cluster Finland co-exhibitors were conducted to find out their satisfaction in the joint fair participation. As a result of analyzing the data, a guide to a successful joint fair participation was produced.</p> <p>The findings showed that a successful joint fair participation requires careful planning, cooperative implementation and certain follow-up procedures after the fair. There are several challenges related to a joint fair participation. However, according to the co-exhibitor interviews, the joint fair participation still brings more benefits than challenges. Trade fair exhibitors learn from each joint fair participation i.e. increase their trade fair intelligence, and therefore are able to perform even better in each upcoming trade fair.</p> <p>In conclusion, it can be stated that a joint fair participation is a good and attractive option, especially for small and medium sized companies, which otherwise would not necessarily have the resources to participate in trade fairs individually. Joint fair participation is challenging, but it can be extremely beneficial when the strengths and assets lying within joint efforts are utilized effectively.</p>	
<p><b>Keywords</b> Joint Fair Participation, Co-Exhibitor, International Trade Fair, Promotion</p>	

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# 1 Introduction

Trade fairs play an important role in today's business world. For many companies fairs are an essential part of the marketing strategy and provide an excellent opportunity to exhibit products and services, increase brand recognition and build relationships with customers at the same time. Many organizations have included trade fairs as a fixed part in their marketing strategy and marketing budget, and participate in these events regularly. In 2010 Finnish firms spent 198 Million Euros, 6% of all marketing investments, into fair participations (Association of Finnish Advertisers, 2010).

Today it has become more common for companies to unite forces and participate in trade fairs together. Joint fair participation brings several important benefits to the co-exhibitor companies, such as reduced costs and shared responsibility. However, the more companies involved, the more challenges there are in coordinating the whole process and implementing it in a way that satisfies each participant.

This thesis is a product based thesis and the purpose is to produce a guide to a successful joint fair participation for the use of the commissioning organization Airport Cluster Finland. Airport Cluster Finland exhibited at the Inter Airport Europe fair 11-14.10.2011 in Munich, Germany, together with 12 of its cluster member companies and that joint fair participation was used as a case study in this thesis.

## 1.1 Commissioning Organization: Airport Cluster Finland

The commissioning organization of this thesis is Airport Cluster Finland, which is a non-profit cluster program executed by Vantaa Innovation Institute Ltd. It started its operations in December 2009, and has at the moment, 26 member companies (attachment 1) in the fields of airport business, airport technologies and solutions, and related R&D. The main financier of Airport Cluster Finland activity and operations is the Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment. Other financiers are Vantaa Innovation Institute Ltd and the member companies. (Airport Cluster Finland, 2011.)

The main goal of the cluster is to support and advance the growth and internationalization of its member companies. In practice, this happens, for example, through development projects, that Airport Cluster Finland implements together with different organizations and its cluster members. Other important activities include clustering & networking, information collection and organizing seminars, excursions and other match-making events. The cluster activities also support the development of the airport city Aviapolis, which is one of the fastest growing business environments in Finland. (Ibid, 2011.)

## 1.2 Research Question & Research Methods

The main research question of the thesis is: How to organize and implement a successful joint fair participation? Sub-questions are: How can the success be measured in this case and what could Airport Cluster Finland have done better during the process? In order to answer the research questions, the first part of the thesis, the theory section, aims to first tackle the question of “why do companies participate in trade fairs in the first place?” The second part of the thesis, found in attachment 2, is the actual guide to a successful joint fair participation.

The research process (figure 1) started with determining the research problem in cooperation with the commissioning party Airport Cluster Finland. After that the theoretical framework was identified and relevant theories were studied. The next phase was data collection and it was done by applying the following research methods:

- **Case Study:** Airport Cluster Finland joint fair participation at Inter Airport Europe with 12 cluster member companies 10-14 October 2011 in Munich, Germany
- **Observation:** Observation during the fair from the perspective of an Airport Cluster Finland employee, talking to people, benchmarking
- **Interviews:** Conducting eight semi-structured interviews with the co-exhibitors of the Airport Cluster Finland joint stand



Figure 1. Research Process

As a result of data collection and analysis, the product “Guide to a Successful Joint Fair Participation” was produced. The whole guide can be found in attachment 2.

## 2 The Extended Marketing Mix for Services

Marketing mix is one of the most important concepts in today's marketing. Kotler & Armstrong (2006, 49) define it as "the set of controllable tactical marketing tools that the firm blends to produce the response it wants in the target market". Marketing mix consists of four groups, known as the "Four Ps", which form the basis of a company's marketing strategy. The Four Ps represent the following elements: product, price, place and promotion (see figure 1). With the decisions related to these elements, a company can influence the consumer and increase the demand of its products.

Lovelock et al (2009) introduce the expanded marketing mix for services, in which the original 4P's have been extended to be more suitable when talking specifically about services. In addition three more P's have been added making the extended services marketing mix to consists of 7P's; Product elements, place & time, price & other user outlays, promotion & education, process, physical environment and people (figure 2).

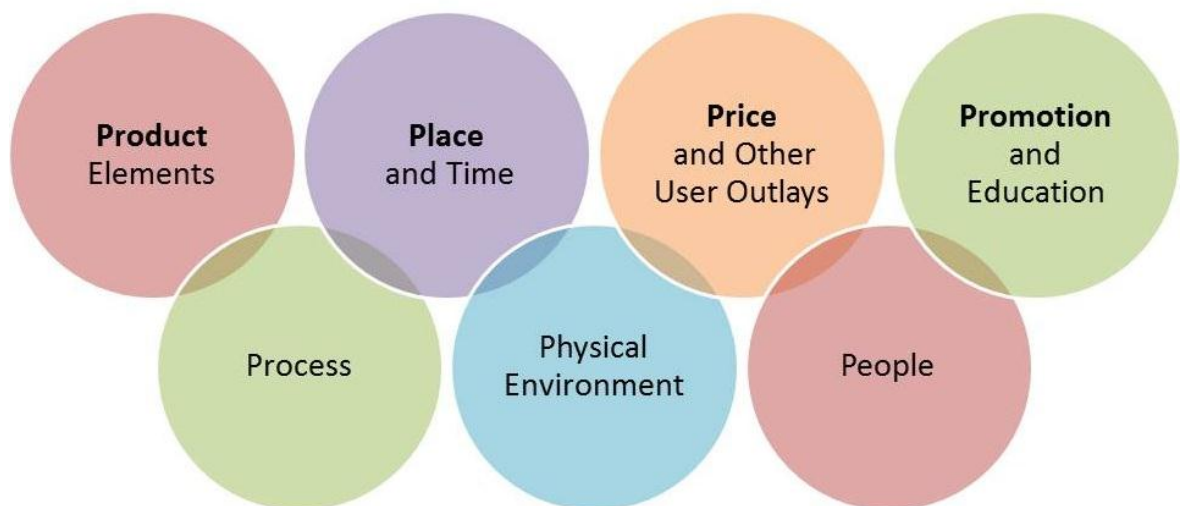


Figure 2. The Expanded Marketing Mix for Services

## 2.1 The Traditional Marketing Mix of 4P's

**Product** means the goods or services, or their combination, which is offered by a firm to its target customers. Product includes the following variables: variety, quality, design, features, brand name, packaging and services. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004.) The extended marketing mix for services talks about product elements, since service products consist of the basic product and its supplementary services. The core product is what fulfills the customer's primary need, whereas the supplementary services bring some additional value to the product. (Lovelock et al 2009.)

**Price** is the amount of money a customer needs to pay in order to obtain the product or service. Price is rarely fixed and it varies with the changing market conditions. The price related variables are list price, discounts, allowance, payment period and credit terms. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004.) In the context of 7Ps's the concepts of price is extended to "price and other outlays". According to Lovelock (2009) service marketers must take into consideration customer's non-monetary costs, such as time and effort, while setting prices for their services.

**Place** refers to the activities that make the product available to the consumer. When determining the place, these variables should be taken into consideration; channels, coverage, assortments, locations, inventory, transportation and logistics. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004.) According to Lovelock (2009) the component of place also includes time. Today many services are available 24/7 and/or can be delivered immediately. This has caused consumers to be extremely demanding when it comes to the place and time of different services and forces the suppliers to constantly improve their service-related processes.

**Promotion** aims in making the customer buy the product by utilizing different activities like advertising, personal selling, sales promotion, public relations and direct selling (Kotler & Armstrong, 2004). According to Lovelock (2009) the functions promotion & education component are to provide information and advice to customers and to encourage them to take action (ie. buy) at specific times. The education component has been added to the expanded marketing mix of services mainly because many services



these days involve the customers' input. For example in libraries customers are often expected to perform the loaning procedure by themselves using a machine. Therefore in service marketing the educational communication is important in teaching the customers to move through a certain service process. The concept of promotion and its variables are further discussed in chapter 3.

## 2.2 The Extended Services Marketing Mix; The Additional 3 P's

**Process** means how a firm does things. Creating and delivering product elements require effective processes from companies. These processes can be hard to control, which means that the productivity, control quality and reliability of service companies are rather difficult to improve. However, standardized procedures, automated tasks and well-trained employees etc. have made significant progress in reducing the variability in service quality. (Lovelock et al, 2009.)

**Physical Environment** consists of the appearance of visible elements providing evidence of a company's image and service quality. These visible elements are ex. buildings, landscapes, vehicles, furnishing, staff members' uniforms and printed materials along with their colors, smells and sounds. These elements are extremely important for a service company to manage, since they have significant impacts on customer's impressions of the company.

**People** are often a part of the service experience. Everyone knows how much a service person can affect a customer's satisfaction –either in a good or a bad way. Therefore it is crucial for service companies to put special effort into selecting, training and motivating their employees who work directly with the customers. (Lovelock et al, 2009).

### 3 Promotion Mix

Building good, long-term customer relationships is at great importance to most of the companies today. When the marketing mix is developed, it is time to think about how to communicate these value propositions to the customers and other stakeholders of the company. This chapter discusses the tools a company can use when communicating and building relationships with different parties they are involved with.

As stated in the previous chapter, promotion is one of the key elements of a company's marketing mix. The variables in the promotion component; advertising, sales promotion, public relations, personal selling and direct marketing, represent the five major promotional tools, and form a concept called the promotion mix (figure 2), also known as the marketing communications mix. Promotion mix is defined as the specific combination of different promotional tools a firm uses when pursuing its advertising and marketing objectives. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006, 427.)



Figure 2. Promotion mix

### **3.1 Advertising, Sales Promotion & Public Relations**

Advertising is used to inform and persuade the consumer. It usually happens through mass media like newspapers, magazines, television and radio. Businesses use advertising to sell their products and services, but also non-profit organizations use it to promote their causes. The responses from advertising may be perceptual or behavioral. Consumer developing a certain opinion about the brand or product is a perceptual response, whereas actually buying the product is a behavioral response. (Kotler et al, 2008, 737)

Sales promotion invites the consumer to response quickly. As opposed to advertising, where the message is “buy our product”, sales promotion aims to communicate “buy our product now”. (Kotler & Armstrong, 2006, 443.) Sales promotion tools, like coupons, special deals and contests, offer powerful incentives for the consumer to buy the product. The effects of sales promotion are effective, but relatively short-term and don't usually help in developing long-term customer relationships.

Public relations include actions like building up a positive corporate image and presence in the media, gaining positive publicity and handling negative rumors and stories. These actions are done in order to develop good relationships with a company's stakeholders and other publics. Public relationships are usually seen as more reliable than advertising, since it often gets to the reader as “news” as opposed to sales-directed communication. Due to this public relations may also reach those consumers, who normally avoid ads and salespeople. (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 443.)

### **3.2 Personal Selling & Direct Marketing**

Personal selling is a very effective promotion tool involving a personal interaction between the buyer and the seller. When there is direct personal contact, the buyer usually feels the need to listen and respond, allowing the seller to find out the customer's needs and try to fulfill them. In the best case personal selling leads to the development of a long term relationship with the buyer. Despite the effectiveness of personal selling, it should be kept in mind that it requires long-term commitment and is a rather expen-

sive tool of promotion. In the United States, for example, companies spend on personal selling on average up to three times as much as they do on advertising. (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 443.) The personal selling process and its major steps are discussed more deeply in chapter 7.1.4.

Direct marketing is direct, often one-to-one communication, with carefully selected customers. Being interactive, immediate and customized makes it a very effective promotional tool. The seller can get immediate feedback and the message can be altered depending on how the customer responds. Direct marketing is well suited when very specific targeting is needed and when the company aims in building one-to-one customer relationships. (Kotler & Armstrong 2006, 443.) Technology has played a significant role in the development of direct marketing and allowed it to become the fastest-growing form of marketing. In addition to telemarketing and mail, the means of today's direct marketing include also all marketing offered through e-mail, websites, interactive television, mobile communications and all the other interactive communications media. (Kotler et al, 2008, 824.)

## 4 Relationship Marketing

During the last decades there has been a paradigm shift in marketing. The idea of marketing mix management, and more specifically the Four P model, as the basic foundation of marketing has been challenged by the growing importance of relationship building and management. It has been argued that the Four P model is a rather clinical approach presenting the seller as the active part and hence making the buyer/consumer passive. This is not well fitted to the reality of ex. industrial marketing. The concept describing this emerged importance of building and maintaining customer relationships is known as relationship marketing. (Grönroos, 1994.) Due to this paradigm shift and its relevance to my study, I will briefly go through the basics related to the concept of relationship marketing.

Grönroos (1994) defines relationship marketing as follows: “Marketing is to establish, maintain, and enhance relationships with customers and other partners, at a profit, so that the objectives of the parties are met. This is achieved by a mutual exchange and fulfillment of promises”. Different authors have slight differences in their definitions for the concept of relationship marketing, but the core message in each definition is more or less the same; Relationship marketing is the process of building and maintaining long-term customer relationships. It aims to create trust between the buyer and the seller through communication, interaction and dialogue. (Bruhn, 2003, Hollensen, 2003, Peck et al, 1999.) The figure below shows the most significant differences between relationship marketing and transaction marketing, a term used by Bruhn (2003) to describe the traditional view on marketing.

<b>Criteria for differentiation</b>	<b>Transaction Marketing</b>	<b>Relationship Marketing</b>
<b>World view</b>	Managing product portfolio	Managing customer portfolio
<b>Assesment horizon</b>	Short-term	Long-term
<b>Key concepts</b>	4Ps, segmentation, branding etc.	Interaction, relationships, networks
<b>Marketing focus</b>	Product/service	Product/service and customer
<b>Marketing goal</b>	Customer acquisition	Customer acquisition, retention and recovery
<b>Marketing interaction</b>	One-way communication	Interactive communication
<b>Economic profit parameters</b>	Profit, profit margins, sales	Additionally: customer profit contribution, customer value

Figure 3. Transaction Marketing vs Relationship Marketing (Applied Bruhn, 2003.)

Relationship marketing can be differentiated into two perspectives, the first one being insular perspective, where the marketing concerns only the company's customers. The other, broader perspective, covers the company's relationship with all of its stakeholders. (Bruhn, 2003.)

## **5 Branding**

Brands are viewed as the most important assets to a company. A strong brand can outlast a company's products and other tangible facilities. Brands represent what the product means to the consumers, and what feelings and thoughts they awaken in consumers. A brand is immediately associated with a specific product or service in consumers mind. It can be any feature, a name, word, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these, that differentiates it from the competitors. (Kotler et al, 2008, Hollensen, 2003.)

### **5.1 Brand Equity**

The value of a brand, known as brand equity, can be extremely powerful and it can influence the consumer's behavior in a favorable way. Highly valued brands are able to capture consumer's preference and loyalty and hence create a significant competitive advantage to the company over its competitors. (Hollensen, 2003.) The factors affecting the level of brand value are brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, strong brand associations and other assets like patents, trademarks and channel relationships. However, brand value is extremely hard to measure in money and companies don't typically list brand equity on their balance sheets. (Kotler et al, 2008.)

### **5.2 Brand Image and Positioning**

Building strong brands is not easy. Hollensen (2003) emphasizes that branding is actually very much like storytelling. The emotional criteria, including the impressions, ideas, opinions and other thoughts associated with a product, are what eventually form the brand image to the consumer's mind. Kotler et al (2008) define brand image as "the set of beliefs that consumers hold about a particular brand". According to Hollensen (2003) all the world-class brands, like ex. Nike and McDonalds, have strong brand attributes and themes, which they have communicated effectively to the consumers, hence creating a story and being able to influence the consumer's buying behavior. Kotler et al (2008) define the term brand positioning as the procedure of setting the brand in a certain way to the consumer's mind. According to both of the writers, it is also

important to think about the benefits, beliefs and values the company wishes to express through its brand.



## 6 Trade Fair Intelligence

According to Jansson (2007, 16) an individual fair participation can be seen as a triangle. The triangle represents the essential phases of the fair participation (See Figure 4). Each side of the triangle represents one stage of the fair participation process, in other words what happens before (left side), during (right hand side) and after the fair (bottom side). The red dots refer to the activities that affect the result of the fair participation.

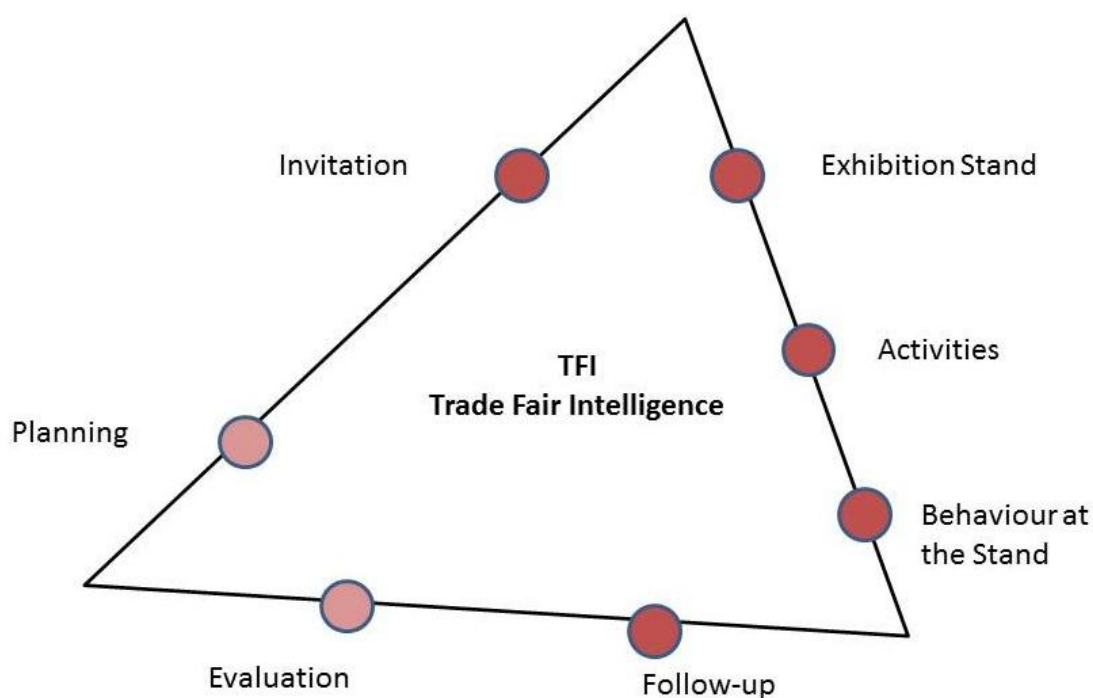


Figure 4. Trade Fair Intelligence (Jansson, 2007)

The idea of the Trade Fair Intelligence triangle is to show that a company's separate fair participations, past and upcoming, are always connected. The evaluation of a previous fair functions as the first step towards the next fair participation. By understanding the relationship between the past and the future fair participations, an organization can learn from the past and develop as an exhibitor, and hence increase its trade fair intelligence. (Jansson, 2007).

Seringhaus & Rosson (2001) divide fair participator companies into two groups: “light users” and “heavy users”. This division is done entirely based on the experience that the companies have within international trade fairs (ITFs). One of the key findings of a study conducted by Seringhaus & Rosson, is that the performance levels at ITFs differ severely between light and heavy users. In other words, heavy ITF users tend to perform better at ITFs and gain more out of them than the light users.

Ramírez-Pasillas (2008) brings up a concept called knowledge cross-fertilization and defines it as “the unintended and intended consequence of dialogue, reflection and observation of others”. According to him knowledge cross-fertilization is one of the key reasons for companies to participate in international trade fairs. He also talks about a concept of absorptive capacity to support the idea that the ability to spot, evaluate and employ external knowledge is very much a function of previously related knowledge.

In conclusion, it can be stated, that the concepts of trade fair intelligence, light vs heavy ITF users, and absorptive capacity all suggest the same thing: the more a company participates and increases its experience within international trade fairs, the more benefits and better results these participations will create.

## **6.1 Planning**

### **Fair idea**

The whole process of fair participation starts with planning. Keinonen & Koponen (2001) recommend using a simple fair idea model (see figure 5) which helps to determine the core for the fair participation and get the planning started. The triangle shows the most critical questions in the planning phase of a fair participation. Once these questions are answered, a company has developed its “fair idea” (Ibid, 2001).

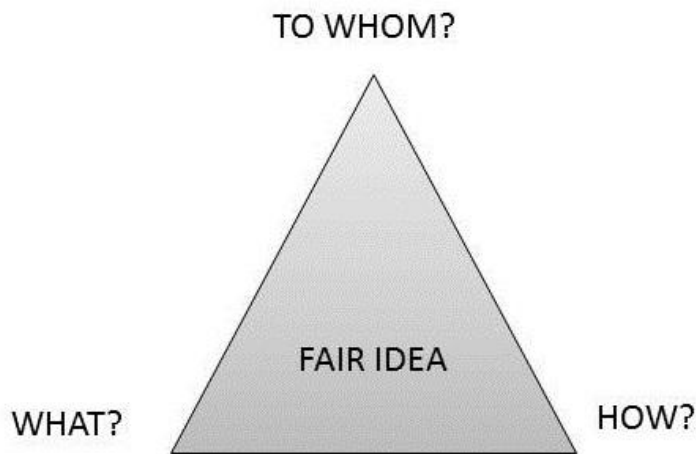


Figure 5. Fair Idea Triangle (Applied Keinonen & Koponen, 2001)

When the fair idea is clear, it is easier to continue the planning process. The next steps are the selection of the event, determining the objectives and finding out the costs. All of these decisions are further discussed below.

### **Selection**

The first management decision to be made about a company's upcoming fair participation is the selection of the event. It is an important decision, and choosing the "wrong" event can result in, not only wasted time and resources, but also in significant financial losses. Therefore the ITF selection is a decision, which requires extremely careful consideration and evaluation of a company's available resources.

One of the major factors in ITF selection according to Seringhaus & Rosson (2001) is "marketing synergy", defined as "the amount of market intelligence possible at a show and how well the show fits company's communication and selling programs". Simply put this means choosing a fair that matches the industry of the company and that preferably attracts the key players in the industry to participate the fair, either as an exhibitor or a visitor.

According to Sering & Rosson (2001) considering competitors is also sometimes relevant in the fair selection. In this approach the strategy can be either "following" or "avoiding" the leader. When deciding to follow the leader, the assumption generally is

that those fairs, that attract the competitors, are the best ones. It might be also useful to observe the competitors to get information about industry trends and the competitors' strategies. Avoiding the leader is usually based on the willingness to avoid direct rivalry and the stealing of customers. (Ibid 2001.)

## **Objectives**

Another very essential step in the beginning of the fair participation process is to determine the objectives for the fair participation. A company can set general long-term /annual objectives for fair participations, but each individual fair participation also needs its own objectives. (Ketonen & Koponen 1997.) According to Jansson (2007) there are two questions to ask when setting the objectives for the fair participation. These questions are "What kind of encounters and contacts a company wants from the fair?" and "What to do with them?" The main idea in the first question is that there should always be a defined target group, which a firm wants to attract to its stand. It is much more useful to pay attention to the quality of the visitors, rather than the quantity. Irrelevant contacts will waste time when moving to the next step –what to do with the contact information. The objectives related to this question can be divided into functional and marketing related objectives. (Ibid 2007.) Functional objectives can be for example "to get xx amount of sales leads during the fair" or "to increase sales by xx%". Marketing related objectives have to do with the brand image and recognition and an example of a marketing related goal could be for example "xx% of the fair visitors will recognize our company's logo after the fair".

## **Costs**

Compiled from the works of a few different authors (Keinonen & Koponen, 1997,2001, AUMA, 2006, Jansson, 2007) the costs of fair participation consist of the following:

### **1. Participation**

- Rent

### **2. Personnel costs**

- Training
- Salary

- Overtime/ weekend compensation
- Daily allowance
- Travel and accommodation expenses

### **3. Stand related costs**

- Planning
- Building
- Decoration & Equipment

### **4. Material handling and freight**

- Transport of materials to the fair and back
- Storing
- Insurances

### **5. Services from fair organizer**

- Electricity; usage, installation etc
- Internet connection
- Cleaning
- Visitor scanner

### **6. Marketing & PR costs**

- Marketing brochures
- Give aways
- IT-equipment
- Catering
- Lucky draw/Competition prizes
- Additional activities(seminars, lectures etc.)

## **6.2 Invitation**

Jansson (2007) uses the word invitation to refer to the procedures related to increasing the awareness of a company's upcoming presence at a fair, and thus getting (i.e. inviting) prospects to visit its stand. The means of communicating this message to the publics are extensive. When used efficiently a company can reach the right publics and attract the most relevant people to visit them at the fair. (Keinonen & Koponen, 2001, 69.) As much thought should be sacrificed into the visitor attraction as into stand design (AUMA, 2006).

Even though the fair organizer takes care of the advertising of the whole event, the individual exhibitors are responsible for attracting visitors to visit their own stands and

making sure the relevant people know that they will be exhibiting at that specific fair. One way to do so, is to pursue for media attention through a press release. According to Keinonen & Koponen (1997) it is a good way of increasing the awareness of a company's fair participation as well as attracting the attention of potential clients and other relevant people to the company's stand. A press release should be sent out to the media at least a month before the actual event. If it is sent earlier it is wise to inform the recipient about the earliest wanted release date (AUMA, 2006). The release should be written in a news format and it can briefly describe also the background of the company. The press release should answer the following questions: Who, What, Where, When and Why? (Jansson, 2007).

As mentioned before, the means of advertising the upcoming fair participation are various. Actual advertising campaigns can be quite costly, but there are several ways to promote the fair participation also without any costs, only limit being the imagination. Especially the internet has provided a good channel to spread information fast, free and to a large audience. Other possible methods suggested for attracting visitors include for example promotional stickers, invitation letters, telephone calls, free-entry vouchers, invitation gifts, announcements in catalogues and external advertising. (Auma, 2006.)

### **6.3 Exhibition Stand**

The exhibition stand is what represents the company the most during the fair. It can be the determining factor, whether the prospect visits the stand or passes it. A good stand is pleasant to the eye and ear and can even appeal to the visitor's emotions (AUMA, 2006). Emotional appeals can motivate purchase and are therefore sometimes very efficient. (Kotler et al, 2008).

The numerous different factors that need to be taken into account make the stand planning process quite challenging. There are companies specialized in exhibition stand planning and it is very common for exhibitors to hire an expert to design and build the stand. (Keinonen & Koponen, 2001.)

## 6.4 Activities

There are several different activities that can be arranged at a company's stand during an exhibition. The typical fair activities such as seminars, panels and cocktail events are effective ways to reach the right people, promote a new product/service and provide additional opportunities for networking. (Serinhaus & Rosson, 2001). The different kinds of fair activities are further discussed in the guide to a successful joint fair participation found in attachment 2.

## 6.5 Behavior at the stand

Stand personnel have an important role in ensuring the success of the fair. Qualified people at the stand allow greater chances for sales, sales leads and new contacts. The stand personnel skills are determined by both the specialist knowledge, but also their personal qualities. (AUMA, 2006.) Important personal qualities required from the stand personnel include, for example, ability to get along with people, flexibility, language and cultural skills, willingness to travel, presentation skills and preferably experience at trade fairs. (Keinonen & Koponen, 2001, AUMA, 2006).

In addition to the previously mentioned qualities, the stand personnel should also have good skills in selling and negotiating. Even though the main purpose of a fair participation is not necessarily selling for all the companies, it is good to understand the selling process and its major steps. The figure 6 shows the seven major steps in effective selling process from the seller's point of view.

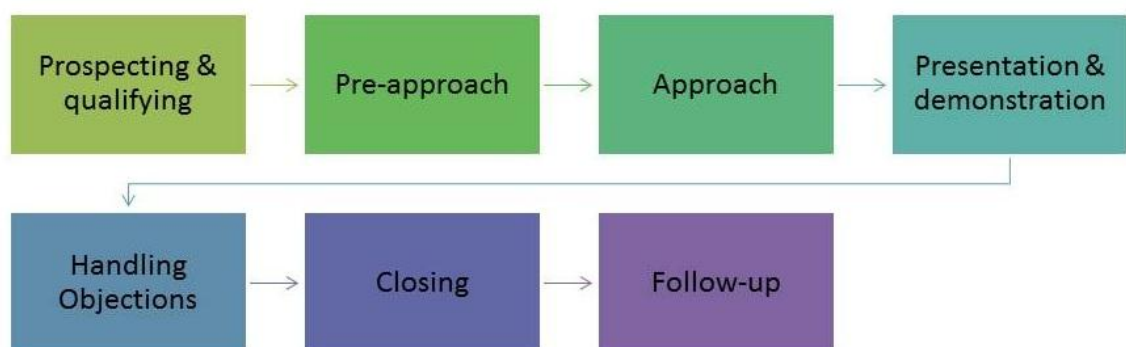


Figure 6. The Personal Selling Process (Kotler et al, 2008)

As the figure above shows, the first step in the selling process is prospecting and qualifying. It is the stage in which the seller identifies a qualified potential customer. Qualifying refers to the seller's ability to spot the good prospects and screen out the poor ones. (Kotler et al, 2008.) The next step in the selling process is the so-called pre-approaching, where the salesperson learns as much as possible about the prospect, whether it is an organization or an individual consumer. Once the needs, buying behavior and other relevant factors of the prospect are investigated, the salesperson can meet and greet the client, taking the selling process to the next level, approach. This stage aims to attract the buyer's attention and interest and get the relationship off to a good start. The next stage is presentation and demonstration, in which the seller tells the buyer about the product or service they are trying to sell. This is followed by the stage of handling objections, during which the salesperson finds out and tries to overcome the customer's objections to buying. It the second last stage of the selling process, closing, where the buyer places in order. Salespeople have several different closing techniques they can use, such as offering lower price if the buyer makes the purchase right away. The seventh and final step in the selling process is the follow-up. The purpose of the follow-up procedures is to ensure the customer satisfaction and increase the possibility for a repeated sale. (Kotler et al, 2008).

## **6.6 Follow-up**

As in the selling process, also in the international fair participation process one of the last steps is the follow-up. Follow-up procedures are very often neglected by companies; the contacts made during the fair are followed-up either too late or not at all. Building good customer relationships is a long process and the exchange of the contact information at the fair is only the very first step in the process (Trade Fairs Guide, 2011). Therefore the follow-up stage plays an important role especially if the contacts collected during the fair are wished to be turned into long-term relationships. (AUMA, 2006.) This is extremely important if the company has received bids or something else at the fair that requires reacting. It gives a good image of the company if the fulfills the promises made to the visitors during the fair. A failure to do so can result in lost sales and generally gives a negative image of the company. (Keinonen & Koponen, 2001.)



## 6.7 Evaluation

Evaluation is the last stage in the trade fair participation process. During the evaluation phase, the overall success of the fair participation is assessed. At this stage the gained benefits of the fair should be measured against the used resources, and it should be checked whether it was worthwhile to participate the fair. The evaluation procedures depend, to some extent, on the objectives a company had set for the fair participation. If it had set numerical targets, for example in regards to the amount visitors on its stand, they can be used as concrete measures against which the success of the fair participation can be evaluated. Also all other objectives set for the fair should be discussed and it should be evaluated if they were achieved or not. It is also essential to spot the failures, if there were any, and think about the ways to avoid them in the future. (Keinonen & Koponen, 2001.) All in all, as stated previously, the final evaluation of a fair participation process functions as the first step in the next fair participation and is therefore an extremely important step that should not be ignored. (Jansson, 2007).

## **7 Conclusions**

A joint fair participation brings several benefits, such as reduced costs and shared responsibilities to the co-exhibitor companies involved. Airport Cluster Finland participating in Inter Airport Europe 2011 was a successful project and got positive feedback from the co-exhibitors. The project also provided a good case study for this thesis and made it possible to compile a guide to a successful joint fair participation according to the research plan. The whole guide can be found in attachment 2 and it includes instructions, ideas, hints and suggestions for the different phases of a joint fair participation process.

The results of the study showed that a successful joint fair participation requires careful planning, effective and cooperative implementation and suitable follow-up procedures. It should be kept in mind that a fair participation is not only the few-day exhibition, but it is a long process requiring dedication from the people involved. At its best a joint fair participation is an excellent way to unite forces between companies. Reduced costs and shared efforts allow even the small and medium sized companies to exhibit their products and services with reasonable costs. Even the challenges related to joint fair participations can be turned into assets when taking full advantage of the strengths, experiences and ideas of all the co-exhibitor companies.

### **7.1 Recommendations**

In order for Airport Cluster Finland to perform even better at upcoming trade fairs, it would be recommendable to focus more on brand building. However, before any actual brand building can happen, it is necessary to determine the basics of the whole activity. Figure 7 can be used as a tool when determining the basics (mission, vision & values), current stage (market & customers) and the goals of Airport Cluster Finland. Once these have been determined, it will be easier to continue forming the overall communication strategy and the branding strategy.

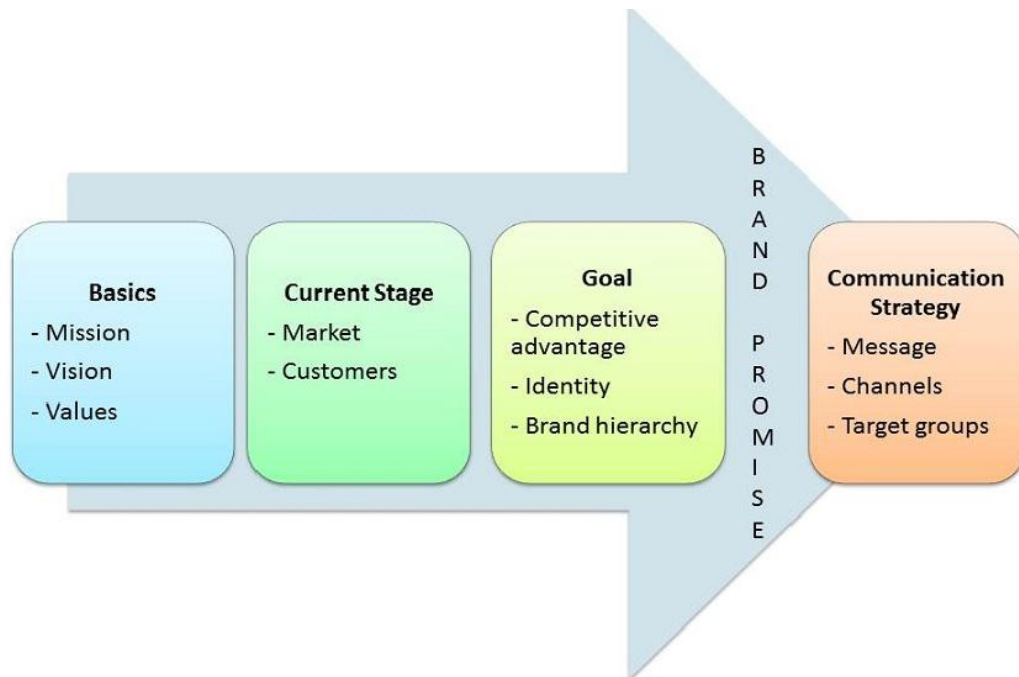


Figure 7. Marketing Strategy Formulation (Applied from a meeting with Dynamo Advertising, 20.10.2011)

The guide produced as a result of this study can be utilized when planning the next fair participation. The exhibitor interviews provided Airport Cluster Finland with valuable information on the wishes and ideas of the cluster member companies. This information should be used well in order to guarantee each co-exhibitor's satisfaction in the upcoming Airport Cluster Finland's joint fair participations. In addition, the guide can be used internally within the organization in training employees who have responsibilities within joint fair participations.

## 7.2 Further Research Topics

Based on the recommendations and as a continuum to this study, a further research could be done on how to start building a brand for Airport Cluster Finland. This kind of research could examine on concepts of cluster brand management and cluster reputation more broadly, and find out how those benefit SME's and larger corporations. Also how, and to what extent those concepts are implemented in different clusters, could be studied.

Another further research topic suggestion could be to study how the promotion and visibility at joint exhibition stands should generally be divided and organized in order to produce a coherent stand, at which all the co-exhibitors would be equally visible. As a sub question it could be considered whether the visibility actually needs to be equally divided or are there be benefits in ex. giving more visibility to the biggest and most famous co-exhibitors. For the purpose of this research, joint stands of different groups at different exhibitions could be examined.

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## Attachments

### Attachment 1. Airport Cluster Finland Member Companies

	Ahkera Smart Tech Ltd	R&D
	Artic Machine Oy	Road Maintenance
	Champion Door Oy	Aircraft Hangar Doors
	Efla Oy	Lightning Components
	Exel Composites Oy	Composite Structures
	Oy Fibar-Group Ltd/Barrisol	Stretch Ceiling Systems
	Finavia Oyj	Service Operator
	Finsecpro – Suomen turvaprojektit	Aiport/Aviation Security
	Idman Airfield Lighting Oy	Airfield Lighting
	Kemira Oyj	Winter Maintenance
	Limowa	Logistics Cluster
	Lemminkäinen Oyj	Building & Construction
	Marioff Corp.	Fire Protection
	Obelux	LED Lights
	Pöyry Group	Construction mngmt



Rapiscan Systems Oy

Metal Detectors



Rostek Oy

Access Equipment



Sensor Center Ltd / Anturikeskus Oy

Sensor Technologies



Skiddometer by Moventor

Friction Testing



SRV Group

Construction

STUDIO ANTTI E

Studio Antti E

Furniture Design



Teleste Oyj

Video Management



Toptester Oy

Testing Lab & Equipment



Vaisala Oyj

Weather Solutions



Vammas by Fortbrand

Winter Maintenance



## **Attachment 2. Guide To a Successful Joint Fair Participation**



Airport Cluster Finland

## **Guide to a Successful Joint Fair Participation**

### **Case Study: Airport Cluster Finland at Inter Airport Europe 2011**

Lotta-Elviira Väinölä

16.12.2011



**HAAGA-HELIA**  
University of Applied Sciences

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## 8 Introduction

Joint exhibition stands, shared between several companies, have become more popular at international trade fairs. The term “joint fair participation” has been used throughout this guide to describe the process of several companies uniting forces and participating in a trade fair together while sharing an exhibition stand at the event. The companies involved in the joint fair participation are referred to as “co-exhibitors”.

Participating in a trade fair jointly with several exhibitors brings many benefits such as reduced costs and shared responsibility over the arrangements. However, joint fair participation also has its challenges. The communication and the responsibilities between the co-exhibitors need to be organized well and effectively. The more parties involved, the more careful coordination the whole process requires. This guide is compiled in order to help in a joint fair participation process from the planning phase all the way through to the final evaluation of the event. This guide is especially targeted for Airport Cluster Finland’s use, and its joint fair participation at Inter Airport Europe 11-14 October in Munich, Germany, with 12 of its member companies, has been used as a case study when making this guide.

The main purposes of this guidebook are to:

- Serve as a guidebook for future Airport Cluster Finland joint fair participations
- Evaluate and report the success of Airport Cluster Finland joint fair participation at Inter Airport Europe 2011
- Present suggestions for improvement for the future by reflecting back to Inter Airport Europe 2011
- Bring concrete value to the commissioning party Airport Cluster Finland

The structure of the guide is based on applied Jansson’s (2007) trade fair intelligence triangle (figure 1).

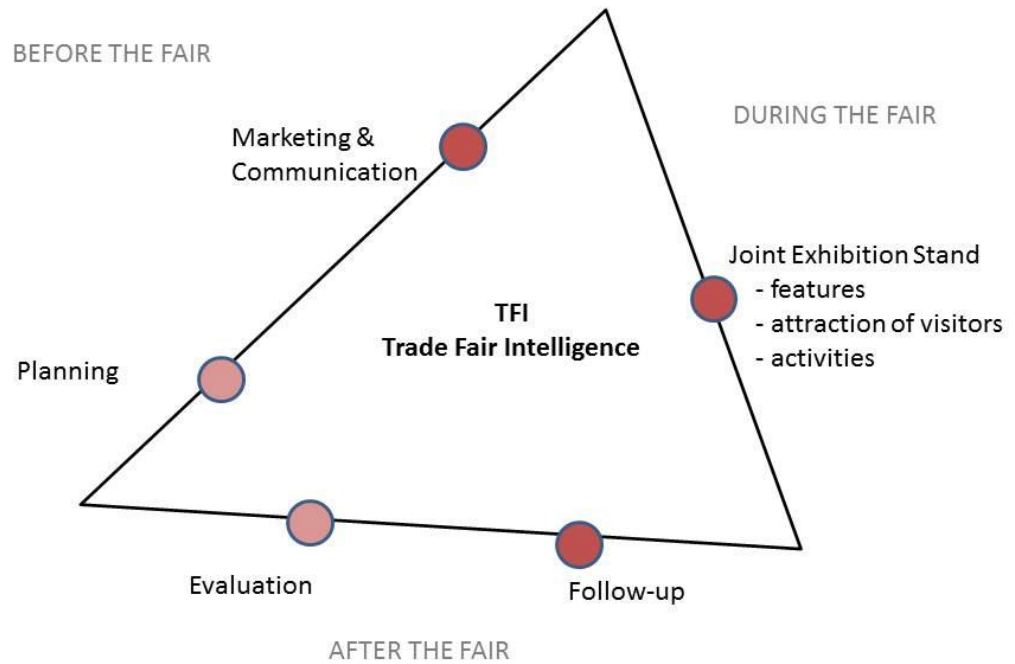


Figure 1. Trade Fair Intelligence Triangle (Applied Jansson, 2007)

## 8.1 Project Description

Airport Cluster Finland (ACF) had never participated in a trade fair as the exhibiting party before its participation at Inter Airport Europe in 2011. The fair participation had, though, been in the plans since the very beginning when the cluster first started its operations. In 2010 ACF made the decision to participate in a trade fair jointly with its cluster member companies. The event was chosen to be Inter Airport Europe, one of the leading events in the airport industry. The event would take place in the fall 2011 in Munich, Germany and it would be the biggest and one of the most important events in ACF's agenda during that fall. The planning of the upcoming joint fair participation started right away in the beginning of 2010, over a year prior to the actual event.

In addition to having a joint exhibition stand at Inter Airport Europe 2011, Airport Cluster Finland would organize an own seminar during the event. The seminar would be an afternoon seminar in which ACF's newest development project, Airport Concepts, would be introduced. The target was to attract about 80 listeners, ideally people

from different airports, to the event. The seminar would end in a cocktail event at the ACF joint stand.

When the joint fair participation idea was officially presented to the cluster member companies, there were nine companies who signed up right away to participate. The final amount of co-exhibitors at the Airport Cluster Finland joint stand at Inter Airport Europe was 12 (figure 2).



Figure 2. Co-exhibitors at the Airport Cluster Finland Joint Stand

## 8.2 Division of Responsibility

Airport Cluster Finland was the main coordinator and organizer of the joint fair participation project. However, a third party Entre Marketing was chosen to manage the issues that ACF does not have resources or the skills for, such as designing and building the exhibition stand. Entre Marketing is a company specializing in event marketing and trade fair arrangements. They offer turnkey planning and design related to trade fairs. Their services for ACF included the planning of the stand layout, construction material, lightning, furniture and other elements of the stand. Also, logistics and transportation of the construction material and the actual building of the stand were included. Entre Marketing was also the middleman between the fair organizing party and ACF, meaning that Entre Marketing took care of all the communication with the fair organizer. During the fair Entre Marketing had one project manager present at the ex-

hibition hall making sure that all the practical issues were running smoothly and according to the plans. This project manager was also responsible for the outsourced personnel, like stand construction and catering staff.

Airport Cluster Finland staff took care of most of the practical arrangements either themselves or through Entre Marketing. The co-exhibitors were responsible for certain issues though, like their own travelling related bookings and freight of their marketing materials to the stand. They were informed about all the issues they would have to take care of. They were also encouraged to invite guests to the joint stand and to the Airport Concepts seminar.

The division of workload of the fair participation project inside Airport Cluster Finland was divided mostly between two people. At the beginning of the process, the Cluster Manager in cooperation with the Communication Coordinator took care of the arrangements. About two and a half months before the fair participation there was a shift in the workload and the Marketing Assistant took over most of the duties of the Communication Coordinator due to her maternity leave.



## 9 Planning the Joint Fair Participation

Planning is an extremely important phase in the joint fair participation process. It starts long before the actual event takes place and requires dedication from the people involved. With proper planning it is possible to take the most out of the exhibition event and achieve the best possible results. This chapter covers the main issues in the planning phase, excluding the planning of the stand, which is separately discussed in chapter 4.

### 9.1 Fair Idea

The very first thing to determine about an upcoming fair participation is the general fair idea. The figure below (figure 3) shows the fair idea of Airport Cluster Finland in Inter Airport Europe 2011. Three questions “what”, “to whom” and “how” have been answered and therefore the ACF fair idea has been generated to give direction in the next steps of the planning process.

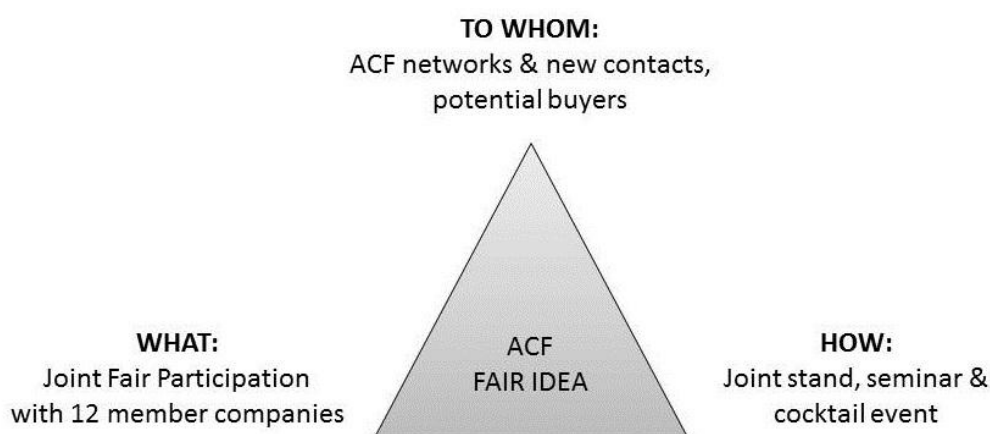


Figure 3. Airport Cluster Finland Fair Idea

## 9.2 Objectives

Setting objectives for the fair participation is important, since concrete aims give references against which the success of the fair participation can be measured. Objectives should be clear and understandable as well as ambitious but yet realistic. Well set objectives also motivate the employees who work at the fair. The objectives set by Airport Cluster Finland for Inter Airport Europe 2011 can be seen in figure 4. The co-exhibitors had their own objectives and they are briefly discussed in chapter 6.



Figure 4. Airport Cluster Finland Joint Fair Participation Objectives at Inter Airport Europe 2011

### **Networking**

Building relationships with different organizations, individual key decision-makers and other relevant parties in the industry is extremely important for ACF. Therefore networking was set as one of the main objectives for the joint fair participation. Due to the nature of the core activities of Airport Cluster Finland, such as networking, organizing match-making events, clustering, organizing seminars etc., it is essential to have a large network. Maintaining and deepening the existing relationships is just as important, and is included in this objective. A concrete target that was set for making new contacts was to collect 400 new contacts during the four day period.

### **Gaining market insight**

Another objective for Airport Cluster Finland was to gain information about the current issues and trends in the airport industry. More specifically, to gain information about new investment projects in the field that could benefit and bring business opportunities to Airport Cluster Finland member companies.

### **Increasing brand awareness and recognition**

Large international events such as Inter Airport Europe provide a good channel for increasing brand awareness and brand recognition. Therefore those two issues were added to the Airport Cluster Finland objectives regarding the joint fair participation.

### **Satisfaction of the co-exhibitors**

As the main organizing party and being responsible for all the arrangements related to the joint fair participation, one of Airport Cluster Finland's objectives was that the co-exhibitors would be satisfied with the event and its arrangements. The satisfaction of the co-exhibitors was measured by interviewing the representatives from the co-exhibitor companies during the fair. The results of the interviews are applied throughout this guide.

## **9.3 Selection of the Event**

The selection of the event is among the first management decisions to be made when starting to plan the fair participation. There are a lot of different events, exhibitions and seminars in the airport and aviation industry. Choosing the wrong event can result in not only wasted time and resources, but also in significant financial losses. Therefore the selection is a decision that requires careful consideration and evaluation of the available resources.

The criteria that Airport Cluster Finland used when choosing the exhibition to participate in were size, nature of event, timing, location and the relevance of the event to ACF member companies. Inter Airport Europe as the leading exhibition of the industry, attracting a variety of exhibitors and visitors would appeal to many of the cluster member companies. In addition, the location, Munich, was convenient being relatively

close geographically. The fall was extremely busy for many of the co-exhibitors and the timing of Inter Airport Europe in the middle of October was not the best for everyone. However, ACF made most of the arrangements allowing the co-exhibitors to join despite of their hurries. During the fair many of the co-exhibitors said that they would not have participated in the exhibition without Airport Cluster Finland.

#### **9.4 Costs and the Internationalization Aid**

It is obvious that one of the biggest benefits of a joint fair participation is the shared expenses and therefore significantly reduced overall costs. The costs of a fair participation are described in the theory section chapter 6.1.

Another issue that makes joint fair participation even more appealing is the fact that Finnish companies have the possibility to apply for an internationalization aid (TEM-kansainvälistymistuki) from the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. “The Aid can be granted to organizations promoting foreign trade, a sectoral group representing enterprises, or to an enterprise that is responsible for organizing a project or an event promoting exports” (Ministry of Employment and the Economy, 2011). The purpose of the aid is to help make Finnish expertise known in international markets and to encourage joint export promotion events of Finnish companies that support the internationalization of business. Participation in international exhibitions and trade fairs is an eligible target for granting the aid. The amount of the aid can be up to 50% of the acceptable expenses of the fair participation. The aid can also be dispensed in a way that the small and medium-sized companies participating in the project can obtain a bigger share of the aid than the larger companies. (Ibid, 2011).

#### **9.5 Timetable**

Time management during the project is extremely important. Fair arrangements start long before the actual event takes place and the follow-up procedures continue after the fair. It is recommendable to make an internal task list containing all the tasks that need to be completed prior to the fair. The list should include the deadlines for each task as well as who is the person responsible for them. The timetable/task list should

be shared with everyone involved in the process. It might be also a good idea to form a separate task list for the co-exhibitors, containing the tasks and deadlines that concern them. This might be challenging though, because of the constantly changing information. A detailed timetable of the Inter Airport Europe 2011 project can be found in attachment 1 to give some direction when planning the next fair participation.

## 10 Marketing & Communication

This chapter discusses both the external and internal communication related to a fair participation. First, the means of inviting guests to an exhibition stand are discussed and some tips on practicalities of the invitation are presented. Next, the promotion mix of ACF at Inter Airport Europe is presented. Finally, the challenges related to the internal communication are discussed.

### 10.1 Invitation to the Stand

It is clear that unique, special and somehow outstanding stands attract people. Some large successful corporations, like Siemens and Vanderlande Industries, had very pretentious stands at Inter Airport Europe and it was clear that their generous stand combined with their giveaways and free beverages they were handing out, attracted a lot of crowd to their the stand. Not all companies, however, have the possibility and the resources to go so “over to top”. Not all companies either need to. It is not uncommon to see large crowds at the smaller and simpler stands as well. It is typical that companies invite people like potential clients, old clients and other important people to visit them at their stand during a fair. Inviting guests to visit a company’s stand is a very good way of maintaining and deepening the relationships with customers and other important people within a company’s network.

Airport Cluster Finland promoted its participation in Inter Airport Europe by a few different ways. One of them was a “promotional sticker” in e-mails (figure 5). The Inter Airport Europe logo and the text “Airport Cluster Finland exhibits at inter airport Europe 2011 (Finnish Pavilion, Hall B5)” as shown in figure 5, was attached at the end of each e-mail sent from any ACF employee. This is a simple, easy, free and a rather effective way to promote the upcoming fair participation and something similar should be used when promoting ACF fair participations in the future.



Figure 5. Inter Airport Europe Promotional Sticker

## 10.2 Invitation to Airport Concepts Seminar

In addition to the promotional sticker, an actual invitation was sent to the Airport Concepts seminar that Airport Cluster Finland organized around its newest development project during Inter Airport Europe 2011. The seminar took place at the fair and the invitation was sent by e-mail to over 500 Airport Cluster Finland contacts. The registration happened by filling a form on the ACF website. About 40 people registered for the event online. The seminar was marketed also by brochures at the ACF joint stand on Tuesday and Wednesday before the seminar. The final amount of participants was still only around 40, which is about half of the wished amount of attendees. In the future it should be kept in mind that the people who have registered in advance might not end up showing at all. Since the seminar is free of charge and there is no cancellation fee, the “no-show” percentage can be rather high. It is still not advisable to take charge for this kind of small scale seminar, but slightly more aggressive marketing, especially during the fair should take place. Next time there should be someone walking around the exhibition center handing out the programs of the seminar (attachment 2) to the fair visitors and to the exhibitors as well.

The seminar was also lacking representatives from the most important target group - airports. Airport Cluster Finland has some contacts from different airports around the world and next time it might be a worthwhile idea to send separate, personal invitations to those people who would be the most relevant attendees in the seminar. When

making the seminar invitation, whether it is the general or the personalized one, the following issues should be kept in mind:

- **Title**

Make the title as interesting and informative as possible. The amount of e-mails that people get today is massive. If the title is not interesting and/or informative enough, it is very likely that the e-mail will not even be opened. Avoid any weird signs on the title, you don't want your message to be confused as spam.
- **Make the invitation personal**

Even though you would be sending the same invitation to a huge list of recipients there are a few tricks that can be used to try to make the invitation seem personal. For example by using the mailing function in Microsoft Word it is possible to include the recipient's name and title to the message, without having to make 500 separate documents.
- **Correct Grammar**

Check and double-check the spelling to avoid any spelling mistakes or incorrect grammar. Poor writing gives a bad image of the sender.
- **Language**

Think about the recipient. If they are not native English speakers, use as simple language and terminology as possible.
- **Registration to the seminar**

Give clear instructions on how and when to register. Make the registration process as easy as possible and think about what information (name, company, title, country?) you need about the person registering. Give enough time to register and send a reminder before the deadline. Do not send the reminder to people who have already registered or declined.
- **Timing for sending the invitation**

Do not send the invitation on Monday morning, when people are busy and have their inboxes full of new e-mails after the weekend. Friday afternoon is also a bad time, since people are already thinking about the weekend and might not read your mail carefully.



- **Reminder**

Once the event is approaching, send a reminder e-mail. Include relevant details about the event ex. date, time, location, instructions on how to get there, program and anything else that might be useful to the guest. Send the reminder a few times; maybe around a week before and once more a day before or even on the same day. People forget things surprisingly easy and they need to be reminded.

### 10.3 Airport Cluster Finland Promotion Mix at Inter Airport Europe

Participating at trade fairs is an extremely effective means of marketing, since it combines elements from each part of the promotion mix. Figure 6 shows the promotion mix of Airport Cluster Finland in Inter Airport Europe 2011 and how Airport Cluster Finland is, in fact, able to utilize all elements in the promotion mix, except for sales promotion, during the fair.



Figure 6. Airport Cluster Finland Promotion Mix at Inter Airport Europe 2011.

## **Public relations**

Airport Cluster Finland made a press release about its upcoming fair participation. The press release was written in English and it can be found in attachment 3. It was published on Airport Cluster Finland website in the news section and was also sent out to over ten Airport Cluster Finland contacts. They were wished to publish the press release on their websites. It was also sent to one newspaper, Helsinki Times, hoping it might be published there. In addition, it was sent to the 12 co-exhibitor companies, encouraging also them to advertise their upcoming presence at the fair. The recipients were allowed to edit the press release if they wished to do so.

The press release was published on one website (poyry.com) in addition to Airport Cluster Finland's own site. Also, a journalist, who writes articles for Greater Helsinki Promotions (GHP) website and to Helsinki Times newspaper, got interested in the new ACF development project Airport Concepts based on the press release sent to him. The journalist requested for more information and wrote an article "New 'Airport Concepts' project unveiled in Munich" published in Helsinki Times and on GHP website.

When writing the press release, there are few issues to consider. A good starting point is to ask oneself the following questions: "who are the preferred readers (target group)?" and "How to reach them?". This helps in determining the channels through which the press release should be published in order to reach the right group of readers. At this stage, the language of the release should also be considered. Sometimes it is a smart idea to prepare the release in two, or even more different languages, to maximize the media exposure. Determining the target readers also helps in the actual writing process and allows the writer to set the right tone to the text, and also determine what kind of terminology can be used. The press release should not be too long and it can also include pictures to make it more interesting and descriptive. It should be sent to the recipients early enough to give them time to edit it or request for more information etc. If there is a specific date you wish to have the release published, inform about that to the recipients.

## **Personal Selling**

Even though Airport Cluster Finland does not exactly try to sell any product itself, it has seminars and other events to promote. Exhibition events provide an excellent opportunity to take advantage of personal selling and promote the upcoming ACF events, such as the Airport Cluster Finland Annual Seminar. Even more “aggressive” personal selling might have been needed during Inter Airport Europe when marketing the Airport Concepts seminar.

While representing several companies at a joint stand the ACF personnel might also have to deal with personal selling situations, where they need to promote the products and services of the member companies. Of course, ACF does not make any actual sales for the member companies though, but provide necessary product, service and contact information to people who are interested.

## **Direct Marketing**

Airport Cluster Finland is able to implement direct marketing by communicating directly with the fair visitors. Direct marketing happens each time the stand personnel tell the visitors about Airport Cluster Finland, its member companies, goals and activities. These dialogues with fair visitors allow interaction and immediate responses from the visitors and are an effective way to build relationships.

## **Advertising**

By the stand layout itself, Airport Cluster Finland was able to advertise and promote its brand. The stand as well as the outfits of the ACF personnel represented the colors of ACF. In the ideal case, the passersby will, in the future, be able to connect the purple color and our logo to the brand Airport Cluster Finland.

Airport Cluster Finland also utilized brochures in their advertising at Inter Airport Europe. The layout of the ACF brochure was created in cooperation with an advertising agency. There were a few changes that needed to be made along the way and the advertising agency would always make the changes, since only they had the tools to edit

the layout. The final version of the brochure can be found in attachment 4. The brochures were ordered directly from Germany and requested to be delivered to the hotel the ACF staff was staying at. The brochures arrived there on time and the print was good quality. The amount of brochures printed for the fair was 1000, which was a lot and over half of them were brought back to Finland.

Even though everything went well with the printing and delivery of the brochures, there is always a risk of either having a mistake or inadequate quality in the brochures. Another risk that always exists is that the brochures will not be delivered on time or at all. This risk can not necessarily even be avoided by transporting the brochures in one's own suitcase, since airlines can also lose goods. It is good to be aware of the possible risks and arrange the print and delivery in way that the risks are as minimal as possible.

#### 10.4 Internal Communication

Internal communication refers to the communication that took place between Airport Cluster Finland, co-exhibitors, Entre Marketing and the fair organizer. The internal communication can be visualized as a chain (figure 7) since not all the parties in the chain communicated with each other. Instead the communication happened through intermediaries. The intermediaries in this case were Airport Cluster Finland and Enter Marketing. Basically it means that no direct communication took place between the fair organizer and the co-exhibitors. The fair organizer did not even communicate directly with Airport Cluster Finland, because all the arrangements were made through Entre Marketing.

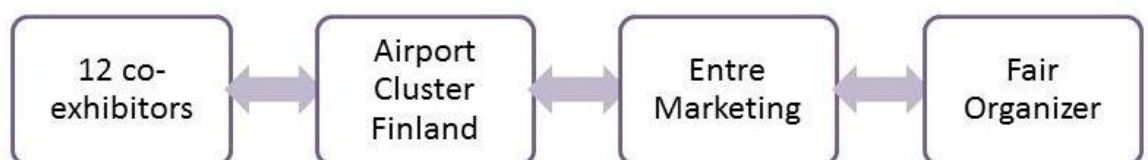


Figure 7. Communication Chain

The fact that information travels through several parties creates a high risk for information delay, alter or loss. Let us use an example that happened during the arrangements of Inter Airport Europe 2011, when one of the joint stand co-exhibitors wanted to know whether there is a possibility for an internet connection at the exhibition. They sent an e-mail to Airport Cluster Finland requesting this information. ACF would then reply that they will find out and get back to them as soon as they know something. Then someone from ACF would contact Entre Marketing to ask about the internet connection at the fair. Next, Entre Marketing would contact the fair organizer. Finally when the fair organizer replies to Entre Marketing, the message has to go through ACF again before it reaches the co-exhibitor, who originally requested this information. If one link in the chain does not reply fast, the whole process can become extremely slow. What makes it even more complicated is that when the information finally reaches the final receiver, in this case the co-exhibitor, it is not necessarily enough. Let's assume that the co-exhibitor finally found out that there is a possibility for a wireless internet connection during the fair, but they would also like to know the prices. To request the price information, the co-exhibitor contacts ACF and the whole communication process starts again. It might also be an option that the fair organizer actually told Enter Marketing the prices, but Entre Marketing did not sent that information forward. This example shows how slow and inconvenient the communication process is. The risk of the message being altered was also demonstrated. In the worst case, which is actually not even that unusual, the message stops at some point along the chain, when one link fails to forward the message for one reason or another.

This issue of internal communication is one of the biggest challenges when it comes to a joint fair participation. In the future, even if using a service like Entre Marketing, it is recommendable having one contact person also among the fair organizers. That way, if there is a question like the one about the internet connection, it would be possible for ACF to contact them directly. This would also be easier for Entre Marketing, since they would have to be the middleman in every single detail. However, it might be that ex. the issue about internet connection is the kind of issue that Enter Marketing should have been aware of in the first place.

There is no clear solution to this problem, but what can be done is to try to anticipate what kind of questions and issues might rise along the way and urge the third party to find out about those issues right away. Although a specialist service provider should know to investigate these kinds of issues in advance the first place. There were some structural changes within Entre Marketing and even the project manager of this Inter Airport Europe case changed a few times, which could have affected negatively in the communication and other difficulties between ACF and Entre.

The communication between Airport Cluster Finland and the co-exhibitors also had its difficulties. Many of the co-exhibitors failed to follow the deadlines set for them. These deadlines were for example for sending their logo in eps -format to ACF or informing who will be the company's representative during the fair etc. There were also two forms the co-exhibitors had to fill and less than half returned them on time. This made ACF consider if there was something wrong with the instructions and the way of communication. ACF had sent these deadlines and the task lists to the co-exhibitors by e-mails followed by several reminder e-mails. Despite of this ACF received several e-mails and phone calls from the co-exhibitors asking which forms to fill, when, and if they had already returned them. Due to this confusion, the co-exhibitors were asked during the interviews about the information e-mails sent by Airport Cluster Finland. They were asked ex. whether the information e-mails sent by ACF were easy to understand and if there were too many of them. Most of the co-exhibitors said that there were indeed quite a lot of messages, but if there was confusion they admitted it was mostly their own fault. Many of the co-exhibitors said they were extremely busy during the fall and did not always have time to read the e-mails properly. This is of course good to know that ACF did not have unclear messages, but it is also quite frustrating to hear that people just did not have time to read important e-mails.

One good point that came up in the interviews though was that in those reminder e-mails, which contain mostly the same information than the previous e-mails, it should be marked very clearly which issues are new. Otherwise people don't read the e-mail, because they think it is the same one they have already read before. There were also co-exhibitors who said that the e-mails concerning Inter Airport Europe sometimes

“drowned” among all the other e-mails that were sent by Airport Cluster Finland. They suggested an own e-mail address for the event, so that all the information concerning the fair participation would come from a completely other e-mail address and the sender would be something like “Inter Airport Europe 2011”. However, ACF had marked all the e-mails concerning Inter Airport Europe 2011 event so that it was clear already from the subject that it would concern the fair. Therefore it is unlikely that a separate e-mail address would make any difference. Especially, because most of the co-exhibitors said that they were simply too busy to read our e-mails.

In the interviews many of the co-exhibitors said that they were not quite sure what to expect from the joint fair participation. There were also a few companies among the co-exhibitors who admitted that they had not realized how beneficial the fair could be and they had not prepared well enough. Now that the companies have seen the potential of these kinds of events, they are more likely to put more effort into whole the process in the future. Hopefully they can be included more and better into the planning phase and hopefully they will pay more to the e-mails sent from ACF.

## **11 Joint Exhibition Stand**

The exhibition stand plays an important role at the fair, since it has the power to make the passerby stop and develop an interest towards the company. The stand should be able to communicate clearly to the fair visitor what the company offers. If nothing attracts the visitor's attention, or if the message is vague or unclear, the visitor is very likely to pass the stand.

### **11.1 Joint Exhibition Stand Features**

#### **Layout**

The layout of the stand should be practical and represent the image of the company. The dominating color of the Airport Cluster Finland joint stand at Inter Airport Europe was purple since it is the general color and the color of the ACF logo (figure 8). The layout of the Airport Cluster Finland joint stand was planned by a third party Entre Marketing. They designed and built the stand according to the wishes given to them. Even though the stand didn't get the best feedback from the co-exhibitors, there were still features that were useful and worth keeping in the future ACF joint stands. These were for example the small meeting room, multiple small bar tables and enough room for storage. It was also a very good feature that the stand was open from three sides, which allowed the visitors to see and enter the stand from many directions. It also made the stand easily accessible and since there were a lot of personnel on the joint stand it was possible to greet and welcome visitors coming from any side of the stand.





Figure 8. Airport Cluster Finland Joint Stand

The meeting room was very good for important meetings that required privacy. Many of the companies at the joint stand had arranged meetings beforehand and the meeting room was very convenient for these meetings. Some people also used the meeting room as a private working space if they had some other work to do during the fair. The room was in use most of time and it functioned mostly as “first come, first served basis”. However, if someone wanted to reserve it for a certain time they could do so.

The ACF joint stand at Inter Airport Europe had quite a lot of room for storage. That allowed hiding all personal belongings of the co-exhibitors and also storing extra brochures etc. Many of the co-exhibitors either came to the fair straight from the airport or left the fair and went straight to the airport so the storage space was also used for storing luggage. In the future it would be advisable for everyone to use the luggage storage at the trade fair center, since there most probably is one available, in order to save space at the stand.

## **Equipment and Technology on the Stand**

One of the biggest challenges of a joint exhibition stand is what and how much equipment each co-exhibitor can bring to the stand. The exhibition space is limited and therefore the amount of equipment each co-exhibitor wishes to bring to the joint stand needs to be controlled somehow. It is recommendable to find out in advance what the co-exhibitors wish to bring on the stand to be able to keep track on what is going to be on the stand and if there is going to be enough space for everything.

There were three 32 inch TV screens at the ACF joint stand at Inter Airport Europe. Two of the screens showed videos of the co-exhibitors and one screen was showing the basic presentation of Airport Cluster Finland. The videos were not considered very effective by the co-exhibitors. The problem was that the videos were unequal, meaning that they varied a lot in length and in quality. Another problem according to the co-exhibitors was that since the videos were shown after each other in a loop, they never knew when their own video would be on.

Despite of these comments, there are also benefits in utilizing videos and they could be used in the future as well. The biggest benefit of a video is that it is a good and easy way of presenting the products and services of the companies, especially if they do not have any concrete samples of their products at the stand due to the limited and shared exhibition space. Many of the products of ACF member companies are such that they would be rather challenging to bring to the stand. Similarly some member companies have intangible services, and in those cases videos can be a good way of presenting those services. Next time it should be made sure that each co-exhibitor knows that they can select their video and show it whenever they would like to do so. Also, at least one of the screens should face outside the stand and not inside, like the screens did this time. The passerby cannot necessarily see the video if the screen is facing inside the stand.

If there are no TV-screens to use, another option is to consider laptops for presenting products and service. With a laptop it would be possible to show company presentations, pictures and websites. However, once again it is a matter of space, since there for

sure won't be enough space for the laptops of 12 co-exhibitors. Also, having a reliable internet access during the fair is not self-evident and it should be taken into account if internet connection is needed. Usually there are WLAN-vouchers available for purchase during the fair, but the prices may be very high. Therefore it might be a good idea to also check if there is a possibility for a wired internet connection and if that would suit better.

### **Division of space and visibility**

Another challenge of a joint stand is dividing the space and visibility at the stand equally among the co-exhibitors. During the interviews some co-exhibitors brought up the idea of dividing the stand somehow between the exhibitors. They suggested that each co-exhibitor would have an own table or a small compartment. However, this would be against the whole idea of a joint stand, where the basic idea is based on a joint space shared, not divided, between all the exhibitors.

What is recommendable for the future, though, is that all the brochures would be organized in a logical way at the stand. They should, for example, all be located in the same place. This way they can all be found in one place and they are not scattered around all over the stand like they were at the ACF joint stand at Inter Airport Europe. There can be brochures also in some other places, but it is important that they can all be found at least in one place. First of all, this is easier for the personnel at the stand, when a visitor asks something about another exhibitor, they would always know where to find their brochure. In addition, this is easier for the stand visitors, since they will be able find all the information in one place and see the big picture of what the cluster can offer. The rack for all the brochures could for example be something like in picture 9.



Figure 9. Brochure Rack

Another option is to consider compiling the basic information of the cluster member companies into one compact brochure. British Airports Suppliers and Equipment Association (BASEA), for example, had created a press package specifically for Inter Airport Europe. It was a neat file that contained an A4-sized brochure of each of their member company. The brochures followed the same layout and they were very pleasant and easy to read. Something like this could be done with the ACF member company information as well.

## 11.2 Attraction of Visitors

### Message

The exhibition stand should be able to attract people from the right target groups and therefore it is extremely important that the message of the stand is clear and communicates to the passerby immediately what the company is and what it offers. Based on the co-exhibitor interviews, the Airport Cluster Finland joint stand was missing this and lacking a common joint message. If a random passerby walked by the joint stand, they could not immediately see what the cluster and the individual companies can offer. The logos of the co-exhibitors were not enough to communicate the range of products, services and the knowhow that the cluster has to offer. According to many of the co-exhibitors ACF needs a clear and short joint message to explain what it is and what it

offers. ACF had a text on the back wall of the stand below all the logos that said “Airport Cluster Finland at your service!”. This sentence was insufficient to explain to a passerby what the cluster actually does.

In the future this problem could be solved for example by making up a slogan that would describe ACF better and tell people more about what ACF does and has to offer. This is a challenging task, since ACF represents several companies who all differ in their service and product provisions. However, the slogan could be something like “Airport Cluster Finland – All You Need for Your Airport “ or “ACF – Finnish Expertise for Airports Worldwide” etc. The slogan would for sure serve also other purposes and not only fair participations. But it is especially important at exhibitions, where the passerby has 10-15 seconds time to figure out what a company does based on what they see on its stand.

In addition to the joint message, the stand should be able to better communicate also what each individual co-exhibitor provides and what their products and services are. It was suggested in the interviews that ACF could somehow categorize the companies based on what they do. Many of the co-exhibitors brought up that the idea behind Airport Concepts –project could be utilized and its work packages could be used in this categorization. The first step in solving this issue was to change the ACF logo table so that all the logos of the member companies have been categorized based on what they do. The current version of the logo table is presented in figure 10.

<b>Management &amp; Funding</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Airport Maintenance</b>	<b>Safety, Security &amp; Terminal Solutions</b>
VANTAA INNOVATION INSTITUTE 	 Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment	   	    
<b>Design &amp; Construction</b>	<b>Airside Solutions</b>	<b>Testing Services</b>	 
      STUDIO ANTTI E	     		<b>Service Operator</b>
			<b>Network Partners</b>
			

Figure 10. Airport Cluster Finland Logo Table with Categorization

### Attraction of visitors

The main purpose of the exhibition stand, in addition to representing the company and its message, is to attract the attention of the fair visitors and more importantly the right target group. The attraction element is especially important if the company wants to focus on making new contacts. The potential new customers or other cooperative parties need to be attracted to the stand somehow. The means of doing this are various and usually depend on the size of the stand, amount of personnel and the nature of the fair. Also, the imagination and experience of the people planning the fair participation and the stand play a key role.

Airport Cluster Finland had not put very much effort into the attraction of the stand – at least not jointly with the co-exhibitors. Airport Cluster Finland by itself organized a lucky draw competition, in which the purpose was to attract visitors to the stand and also encourage them leave their contact information there.

Only one of the co-exhibitors had brought so called giveaways to the joint stand. The giveaways were popular and it is surprising how people are attracted to free things also at trade fairs. The giveaways on the ACF joint stand were pens and key holders. Next time it could be wise to remind the co-exhibitors of the possibility to bring giveaways,

because by giving out ex. pens with a company's logo, the company might be able to increase their brand awareness among other things. Another option is to produce something in cooperation with the co-exhibitors. A term "joint contribution" was brought up in one of the co-exhibitor interviews. It was used to emphasize that the co-exhibitors should put more joint effort towards the fair participation and perhaps produce a joint giveaway to be handed out at the joint stand. It does not have to be anything too fancy or complicated, since even the pens handed out on the ACF stand were extremely popular. Even though some of the co-exhibitors also said that each company should take care of their own giveaways, it is a worthwhile idea to consider producing a small giveaway as a "joint contribution".

One co-exhibitor brought its product to the stand and it was by far the most "attractive" element on the joint stand. It was a chair by Studio Antti E representing a concept of "Space of Silence". The chair has a very interesting look to it and when you sit in the chair it blocks out most of the outside noises. In the future, the location of the chair on the stand should be thought out well. This time, the chair wasn't part of the original stand plan and therefore it did not get the most ideal place. Next time the chair should be put into a place, where it is able to get the attention it deserves.

There was one co-exhibitor at the joint stand who was introducing their new, recently launched web application "What to bring on a flight?". The application tells the user what they are allowed to bring on board on a flight. It is a useful, easy to use and free application and does not require registration. This application could have attracted a lot of crowd to the stand, if it had been brought out and promoted better. A sign or a roll-up with an inviting text like "Come and try a new application!" already tells much more than a laptop on a table.

Next time more attention should be paid on how the attractive elements on the stand could be better highlighted and how they support one another. This concerns also the co-exhibitors and they should be challenged to think about the solutions to these issues faced on the joint stand. They are the ones who have the equipment and material, like roll-ups etc. to promote their offerings better.

### 11.3 Stand Activity

#### Stand Personnel

The personnel on the exhibition stand should be motivated and qualified in order to achieve the best possible results from the fair participation. The qualifications are not only based on specialist knowledge, but also on personal qualities like ability to deal with people, knowledge of foreign languages, flexibility, ability to deal with unexpected, good stamina and health.

The personnel on the stand form a team, in which each person should have a role. The team should be well informed about the objectives of the fair participation, so that they can work together towards achieving the goals. In a joint fair participation the limits of a team are a bit vaguer, since each co-exhibitor has their own objectives and own representatives/teams present at the stand. From one point of view a joint stand includes several smaller teams. From another point of view all the co-exhibitors together form one big team. However, at least within the smaller company-specific teams the objectives and roles should be clear to everyone to make the work on the stand easier and more effective.

When it comes to the outfits of the stand personnel, each co-exhibitor should be able to represent their own company, meaning that not all the people at the joint stand necessarily need to dress similarly. Airport Cluster Finland's own personnel at Inter Airport Europe, however, wore similar outfits which represented the ACF colors. Everyone wore a black suit with a white collar shirt. In addition, the male staff wore a purple tie and the female staff a purple scarf. The co-exhibitors could dress as they wished to.

When thinking about the amount of personnel required at the exhibition stand, there are a few issues to consider. First of all, if the event itself and/or the working hours are long, more staff is definitely needed. If the opening hours of the exhibition are long, the stand personnel should be able to have breaks during the day. Therefore enough staff is needed to cover each other during the breaks. There should also always be at least one person who takes care of the stand management and makes sure that the



stand is tidy and everything runs according to the plans. The size of the event should be considered and if a large amount of visitors is expected, there should be enough staff at the stand.

It is extremely important for the stand personnel to look easily approachable. At a joint stand one problem could be that the co-exhibitors talk to each other and therefore make it more difficult for the visitors to approach them. The exhibitors should always pay attention to the passersby approaching the stand. Having discussions with other staff on the stand is okay, as long as the visitors are not forgotten or ignored.

### **Catering of Clients and Stand Personnel**

Companies often arrange meetings during the fair either with potential customers or with already existing contacts. It is typical to serve some drinks and in some cases even some snacks at these meetings. Alcoholic options are not uncommon, but non-alcoholic options should always be available as well. If there are a lot of meetings, or as in ACF's case, a lot of co-exhibitors with their own clients, it is necessary to prepare for the consumption of drinks and possibly snacks by ordering a catering service in advance.

Catering of the stand personnel is also an issue to consider prior to the event. At Inter Airport Europe 2011 Airport Cluster Finland had arranged catering for the co-exhibitors each day of the exhibition. It included lunch once a day and drinks throughout the whole day for the exhibitors. The system was a little confusing and in the future it would be recommendable to agree the terms of the catering well and clearly before the exhibition. ACF for example had a set of drinks delivered to the joint stand every day of the exhibition, but there was no refrigerator in which the drinks could have been stored. These kinds of details should be made clear when ordering the catering. No one wants to drink, or especially serve warm beverages to important clients.

### **Additional activities during the fair**

Different additional activities, such as seminars, panel discussions, competitions and launching events during trade fairs are common. The additional programs can be ar-

ranged either at or outside a company's stand, depending on the nature of the activity. The additional activities should be selected and organized to support the objectives set for the fair participation. Airport Cluster Finland organized the following additional activities during Inter Airport Europe 2011:

- **Seminar**

Airport Cluster Finland organized an own seminar around its newest development project Airport Concepts. The speakers of the seminar were from Airport Cluster member companies. In the seminar the idea behind the concept thinking was introduced. The seminar attracted about 40 listeners, which is roughly half of the wished amount.

- **Cocktail Event**

After the Airport Concepts seminar, all the seminar participants and speakers were invited to the Airport Cluster Finland joint stand to a cocktail event. The event was open for all fair visitors and it attracted around 100 people to the ACF joint stand. The event lasted about two hours. The arrangements went well and the event got very good feedback from the co-exhibitors. The catering was ordered from a third party and it included beer, sparkling wine, cocktail snacks and four waitresses.

- **Lucky Draw**

Airport Cluster Finland organized a lucky draw lottery during the fair. There was a box on the joint stand, in which people could drop their business cards and by doing so they participated in the lucky draw competition and got a chance to win a price. The price was gift card to Amazon online store worth of £40. The idea was to perform the lottery each day at 4pm and that would hopefully lure the visitors back to our stand to hear if they won.

The lucky draw box was not very popular and during the first day it was clear that no one came back to hear if they won. There were also only few cards in the box after the first day. It was decided to skip the first day's lottery completely and instead pick two winners the next day during the cocktail event when there would be

a lot of people at the stand. On Wednesday during the cocktail event one person was walking around with the lucky draw box encouraging everyone to drop their cards into the box. This was an effective way of collecting the cards and the lottery was performed during the cocktail event. Announcing the winners in the middle of the cocktail event provided a good moment for ACF to say a few words and thank all the people for coming to the event.

In the future the lottery should be done only once during the whole fair and there should be one very tempting prize instead of four “average” prizes. The timing of the lottery would be the best during an event which gathers together a lot of people, like the cocktail event at Inter Airport Europe. If that is not possible, the lottery can also be done after the fair and the prize can be delivered by mail.

The biggest benefit of the lucky draw is collecting the contact information. However, the lucky draw could be done in a way, that it also “forces” the participant to learn something about Airport Cluster Finland at the same time. Instead of only dropping a business card into the box, the people could be asked to fill out a short form. The form would contain a few very simple questions about Airport Cluster Finland, like “How many member companies does Airport Cluster Finland have?”. The answers should be easily available or otherwise obvious. By doing this kind of short questionnaire it is possible to increase brand awareness and knowledge. However, since people were not very eager to just drop their card into a box, they might not be very excited about having to fill a form. But that is why the prize needs to be very tempting.

- **Co-exhibitor dinner**

Airport Cluster Finland organized a dinner event for the co-exhibitors and other ACF members who were either visiting the fair or exhibiting at an own stand. The dinner was organized in cooperation with the Danish Airport Group (DAG) and provided a good opportunity for networking.

## **Visitor Records**

One of the main objectives of a fair participation is often networking and making new contacts. The new contacts need to be recorded somehow, so that they can be added to the company's customer/contact base.

The visitors at the Airport Cluster Finland joint stand were recorded by a visitor scanner provided by the fair organizer. In addition, there was the lucky draw box, where the passersby could leave their business cards. The visitor scanner was convenient, it was easy to use and the contacts were available online at the end of each fair day. The contacts recorded in the scanner were often those, which someone from the joint stand had actually spoken to and been interested in as opposed to the lucky draw box in which anyone could drop their card, even though they would not belong to the target groups of any of the co-exhibitors. In one-to-one conversations, it is common to exchange business cards and that was one more way of collecting the visitor records. To make new contacts, it is recommendable to also visit other stands instead of only waiting for interesting people at the own stand.

## 12 Follow-up

Follow-up procedures related to the fair participation are often either neglected or performed too late. In order to turn the contacts made during the fair into good business relationships, certain follow-up procedures are needed. Follow-up procedures are also often needed in the internal reporting of a company. Reports, summaries and evaluations are useful for example when monitoring the success of the fair and preparing for the next exhibition event.

### 12.1 Thank You Letter

One common follow-up procedure is to send a thank you letter to the most important, or all, visitors at a company's stand. It can be a general message or a personalized message according to who the receiver is. The letter can be sent through mail, but e-mail is always faster, cheaper and easier to respond to.

The thank you letter should be sent as soon as possible after the event. If the letter is a general letter sent to each visitor, it is recommendable to customize the letter at least so that it addresses the recipient by either their first or last name. The letter does not have to be long or complicated, but should communicate the main point clearly. It is also suggested to add your company's website and contact information to the letter. The letter can also be used for marketing purposes as Airport Cluster Finland did, by marketing its upcoming 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Seminar in the thank you letter. The thank you letter sent to the visitors of ACF joint stand at Inter Airport Europe can be found in attachment 5.

The thank you letter can be effective and definitely worth sending, especially compared to the amount of resources and efforts it requires. After sending the Airport Cluster Finland letter, ACF received several replies, including one request for more information, which eventually led to one new cluster member. ACF also received event and visitation invitations from different companies in the airport and aviation industry.

## **12.2 Contact List**

After the fair Airport Cluster Finland compiled an excel sheet of all the contacts made during the fair. It was sent to all of the co-exhibitors and can also be found in Airport Cluster Finland extranet with all other Inter Airport Europe 2011 related material.

## **12.3 Report**

Airport Cluster Finland made a brief report about the joint fair participation. The report is mostly for ACF's own purposes and for the financiers of the cluster, but it was also sent to all of the co-exhibitors and other cluster member companies. The report can be found in attachment 6.

## **13 Evaluation**

Evaluation is an essential part of the fair participation process and should not be neglected. Evaluation of the past event is also the first step towards the next fair participation and by carefully evaluating and learning from the previous fair participation a company can increase its trade fair intelligence. Airport Cluster Finland evaluated the event from three different points of view; the event Inter Airport Europe as a whole, ACF's own satisfaction and the satisfaction of the co-exhibitors.

### **13.1 Inter Airport Europe Exhibition**

This year Inter Airport Europe attracted 606 exhibitors from 34 different countries and 12 600 visitors from all over the world (Inter Airport Europe 2011). These statistics support the fact that Inter Airport Europe is indeed one of the biggest events in the industry. When evaluating the whole event it should also be considered, whether the right group of people was reached during the fair. In other words, were the visitors of the whole event in general those people, who ACF wished to meet. Airport Concepts seminar for example wished to reach decisions makers and purchase managers from different airports, but based on the contact list collected during the fair, it can be stated that there were not many of those at the fair. Other than that, ACF was quite satisfied with the event as a whole.

### **13.2 Airport Cluster Finland Point of View**

After the fair it is important to look back to the objectives set for the fair participation in the beginning and evaluate whether they were achieved or not. In case of failing to achieve the objectives, it is necessary to think about the reasons behind this. Airport Cluster Finland had set networking, increasing brand awareness and recognition, gaining market insight and finally satisfaction of the co-exhibitors as its objectives for Inter Airport Europe 2011.

The concrete target for new contacts was 400. At the end, ACF was able to collect 200 new contacts, which is half of the set target. However, this was the very first fair partic-

ipation for ACF and it was difficult to know what to expect. For the next time, it will be easier to set more realistic objectives. Also the “quality” of the contacts matter more than the quantity. The people who are the most important for ACF and who it should focus on are for example airport operators, airport purchase managers, potential clients for our member companies and potential new members for the cluster.

Whether ACF was able to increase brand awareness and recognition is extremely hard to measure. One thing that could be noticed, though, is that during the week of the fair as well as the weeks before and after, the average amount of visitors on the Airport Cluster Finland website ([www.airportcluster.fi](http://www.airportcluster.fi)) increased significantly. Figure 11 below shows the amount of visitors from the beginning of August until one week after the fair. As can be seen from the figure, there is a noticeable spike in the amount of visitors around the time of Inter Airport Europe.



Figure 11. Airport Cluster Finland Website Visitors 1.8-23.10.2011

In addition to the increased traffic on ACF website, Airport Cluster Finland also got two new members because of the fair participation, making the total amount of members 29 at the moment.



### **13.3 Co-exhibitor Satisfaction**

The satisfaction of the co-exhibitors was evaluated by interviewing those co-exhibitors who had a representative present at the fair. The interviews were semi-structured and they were done during the last days at the fair. They allowed the co-exhibitors to express their opinions freely and present suggestions for improvement for the next time. The results of the interviews have been applied throughout this guide.

The objectives that the co-exhibitors had set for the fair participation were mostly networking, making new contacts, deepening the existing relationships and getting sales leads. Many companies had invited clients or other relevant people to visit them at the joint stand. These companies said that almost everyone they had invited, actually came to visit. Most of the co-exhibitors said that all in all their objectives were achieved and that they are satisfied that they had participated in the fair jointly with ACF. There were also a few who stated that they even exceeded their expectations.

When asking for a grade for the whole event, many of the co-exhibitors wanted to divide the fair participation into arrangements and the stand, and grade them separately. The average grade for the arrangements was 4,6 on scale of 1-5 (five being the best). The layout and elements of the joint stand left room for improvement getting an average grade of 3. When asking the co-exhibitors' willingness to participate in similar events with ACF in the future, almost all said they would be interested. However, some of them had one condition; they should be able to bring their product or at least roll-ups and pictures of their products to the joint stand. This is challenging but an important issue to keep in mind when planning the next joint fair participation.

### **13.4 Suggestions for Improvement**

Many of the issues, that came up in the co-exhibitor interviews or otherwise along the process while planning and implementing the joint fair participation, have been discussed already throughout this guide. This chapter discusses some of the most important issues a little bit more carefully and presents suggestions for improvement.

- **Exhibitor Meeting**

Based on the co-exhibitor interviews, it is recommendable to have at least one exhibitor meeting prior to the fair. The meeting should take place well in advance of the fair and ideally include a representative from each co-exhibitor company. Most of the member companies' ACF contact people are not marketing and sales people, but it would be very good if there were some of those people involved in the planning as well. The purpose of the co-exhibitor meeting would be to determine some common objectives for the fair participation and possibly go through also the individual exhibitors' aims. While sharing the objectives, the co-exhibitors should briefly introduce their companies and what they offer. It is useful during the fair that everyone knows about the other co-exhibitors and their product and service offerings. This way, when a visitor asks something about one of the joint stand companies, the staff is able to answer, and direct the visitor to the right person.

Another purpose of the exhibitor meeting is to plan the stand layout a little bit together. It is good to hear about the opinions and ideas of all the exhibitors. However since there are several companies involved, it might also be quite challenging to try to fulfill everyone's wishes. Therefore there should be one party who still has the main responsibility over the planning, like ACF had at Inter Airport Europe.

One more benefit of an exhibitor meeting is that when companies share their ideas, they also share experiences. Many of the joint stand companies have a lot of experience in participating in trade fairs and their advices and ideas can be extremely useful.

- **Registration Procedures**

The co-exhibitors needed to fill two forms for the participation to Inter Airport Europe 2011. One of the forms was a registration form for Inter Airport Europe. By filling the form, the company's name would appear in the exhibitor lists in Inter Airport Europe Preview Magazine and on the website. The other form the co-exhibitors had to fill was a form to apply for the internationalization aid from Ministry of Employment and the Economy.

Airport Cluster Finland was operating as a middleman in this case, since even though neither of the forms was really for ACF's use, they would still have to be sent to ACF staff who would then forward them to the next parties. There was a lot of confusion with the forms and in the future only one person should take care of these forms (sending, receiving, forwarding etc.). This person should clearly state the purpose of the forms and the deadlines for returning them and keep track of which of the companies have already returned which forms.

Even though it was difficult for the co-exhibitors to fill already only two forms, it might still be a good idea to have one form of registration for Airport Cluster Finland's use as well. During the arrangements of the fair participation ACF was faced with a situation where one of the co-exhibitors announced that they would not participate in the joint fair with ACF and they had never even planned to do so. ACF had counted them as one of the co-exhibitors. No actual damage happened due to this, but in order to avoid these kinds of misunderstandings in the future, the registrations should be taken in written form.

One more issue that could be considered is, if Airport Cluster Finland as the main organizing party needs to know the schedules of the co-exhibitors. ACF had not asked the co-exhibitors when they were going to be present at the fair and how long etc. Everything went well without knowing this information, but there could be a situation where this information would be needed.

- **Objectives and Staff Roles**

Setting objectives for a fair participation is important, since concrete aims give an idea what the company wants to achieve during and after the fair. The objectives should be communicated clearly to all the employees, who are dealing with the fair arrangements, and most importantly to those employees, who will actually be working on the exhibition stand. When the stand personnel are aware of the common targets set for the fair participation, they will be more motivated to work towards

the goals. Sometimes it is effective to even set individual goals for each employee separately.

Another important issue is to assign roles for the stand personnel. When each employee knows their role, everyone including themselves, will know what is expected from them. Assigning roles makes the work at the stand easier and it is clear who is in charge of what.

- **Stand Organization**

In the co-exhibitor interviews ACF received a lot of feedback and suggestions for improving the exhibition stand. Not all of the suggestions are possible to implement in practice, but some of them were discussed in chapter 5.

When criticizing the stand and its elements etc., it should be kept in mind that the whole point of a joint stand is that the stand is shared, not divided, between the exhibitors. One of the biggest challenges of a joint stand is indeed how to promote the exhibitors as group but also make each individual company stand out.

The freight related processes would have needed clarification at Inter Airport Europe. Most of the co-exhibitors had used a freight service to transport their marketing materials to the fair. After the fair it was a bit unclear which of the materials would be sent back to Finland and who would pack them. At Inter Airport Europe the packaging materials that would be needed later would have been stored either at the own stand, or another option was to send them to the common cold storage. When choosing the latter option, the packaging materials would be delivered back to the stand during the last day of the fair by midnight. This is very important information to know in advance, because no one will be at the stand waiting for the packaging materials until midnight. Therefore it is better to store the materials at the own stand or find out if there is some kind of packaging service etc. This information should be also told to the co-exhibitors so that they don't expect ACF to take care of these issues for them.

## 14 Closing Words

Shared costs are only one example of the many benefits that a joint fair participation can bring to the co-exhibitors involved. According to the interviews of the co-exhibitors of the Airport Cluster Finland joint stand at Inter Airport Europe, the biggest benefits of the joint fair participation are reduced costs and shared responsibility, especially for the small and medium sized companies. Other benefits are internal unity and team spirit at the joint stand and the need for fewer employees per company. Almost each co-exhibitor was satisfied to the joint fair participation and its arrangements at Inter Airport Europe 2011 and expressed a further interest to participate in fairs together with ACF also in the future. Most co-exhibitors stated that they were able to achieve or even exceed their objectives set for the joint fair participation.

One of the greatest challenges of a joint fair participation is finding the balance between promoting each company individually and the entire group as a whole at the same time. The criticism that came up in the co-exhibitor interviews had to do with the joint message at the Airport Cluster Finland joint stand, or more specifically, the lack of it. The co-exhibitors felt that their logos were not enough to communicate what the cluster has to offer. Airport Cluster Finland has already taken action and based on the co-exhibitor's comments improved some of the issues that arose during the first joint fair participation. Among others the table of logos, has now been categorized based on the offerings of the cluster member companies, and even with a glance of it, one can see what kind of products and services Airport Cluster Finland member companies provide.

The next Airport Cluster Finland joint fair participation will take place at Passenger Terminal Expo 2012 in Vienna, Austria. The upcoming fair participation is part of Airport Concepts project, but many of the people as well as companies involved in this fair participation are the same who were involved in Inter Airport Europe 2011. Each of those companies and individuals has now experience in a joint fair participation and therefore has increased their trade fair intelligence. This raises the expectations of the upcoming fair participations in a positive way. Each individual fair participation makes

the exhibitors wiser and the learning process will never be complete, since there is always room for improvement and for new ideas.

Hopefully this guide and the joint fair participation checklist (attachment 7) will help in the practical arrangements of the upcoming joint fair participations of Airport Cluster Finland to ensure the best possible results for each individual company as well as the whole cluster itself. The key is to turn the challenge of having many parties involved, into an asset, and take advantage of the strengths, experiences and ideas of each co-exhibitor company.

# Attachments

## Attachment 1. Inter Airport Europe 2011 Timetable

Date/Deadline	Subject	Notes
<b>2010</b>		
May 2010	Initial contact with Entre Marketing	Stand planning, building and materials
May 2010	First info to member companies	
October 2010	Idea presented officially to member companies in a cluster meeting	9 companies signed up
<b>2011</b>		
January	First layout of stand from Entre	
February	Booking flights and hotel	
February	Official registration papers and contract with Entre	
June	Booking the seminar space	
<b>August</b>		
15.8	Confirmation of the participating companies for Entre	1 company cancelled after this
19.8	Logos in eps form to Entre	
19.8	2nd Info mail to co-exhibitors	General information about arrangements
24.8	Contacting advertising agency about ACF marketing brochures	
26.8	Videos from co-exhibitors	Last materials were delivered 23.9
30.8	Reservation inquiries to restaurants (member dinner wed 12.10)	Preliminary reservation for 20 people, ask for menus and prices
<b>September</b>		
6.9	1 <sup>st</sup> AC seminar invitation	Registration deadline 23.9
15.9	Final version of the brochure ready, order printing	United Print Germany
12.9	Invitation to member dinner (wed 12.10)	Enrollment deadline 29.9
20.9	2 <sup>nd</sup> AC seminar invitation	Registrations so far 28/78 (deadline extended to 28.9)
26.9	Clothes for the fair staff	Shopping in Jumbo
<b>October</b>		
1.10	Confirmation of the restaurant reservation (inform amount of people & menus to the restaurant)	Final amount of people was 30
7.10	Delivery of the ACF brochures to the hotel	
10.11	Mikko & Lotta to Munich	Rest of the ACF team arrives 11.10
<b>11-14.10</b>	<b>Inter Airport Europe 2011</b>	
12.10	Airport Concepts Seminar & Cocktail Event	
12.10	ACF member dinner	
13-14.10	Co-exhibitor interviews	Interviews with 9/12 co-exhibitors
19.10	Thank You letters to fair visitors	
	Compiling the contact list	Containing the contacts made during the fair
20.10	Joint fair participation report	

## Attachment 2. Airport Concepts Seminar Brochure and Program



# Airport Cluster Finland



**WELCOME TO AIRPORT CONCEPTS SEMINAR  
ON WEDNESDAY 12th OCTOBER!**

Airport Concepts project creates turnkey solutions by combining and complementing the products and services from various selected suppliers of different fields in the airport industry. These concepts differ from the traditional airport industry's business model and create benefits such as cost savings when purchasing products and services for airports worldwide.

**Time:** Wednesday 12th October, 13:00 – 17:00  
**Venue:** Conference room B52, 1st floor at the south end of A/B hall

The seminar is free of charge and includes cocktails at the Airport Cluster Finland stand.  
Come and hear about new innovative way of thinking!

**PROGRAM:**

13:00	Opening and Airport Cluster Finland Presentation. Director Mikko Punakivi, Airport Cluster Finland
13:30	Future Runway Deicing Concept Marketing Manager Björn-Olav Larsen, Kemira Oyj
13:50	Airside Lighting Concepts & Frangibility Business Development Manager Jaakko Martikainen, Exel Composites Oyj CEO Kari Virtanen, Idman Airfield lighting Oy
14:10	Conceptual Change in Airport Design Architect Stefan Ochsner, Pöyry Group
14:30	Concepts panel: Discussing the concepts with the speakers
15:00	Cocktails at the Airport Cluster Finland stand The Finnish Pavilion, Hall B5
17:00	Event ends

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**Register at Airport Cluster Finland Stand 1344 in Hall B5**



### **Airport Cluster Finland represents Finnish expertise at inter airport Europe 2011**

Airport Cluster Finland and 12 of its member companies will exhibit at the world's leading trade exhibition for airport industry 11-14 October 2011. The 18<sup>th</sup> inter airport Europe event takes place in Munich Trade Fair Centre. Last year the event attracted over 500 exhibitors from almost 30 different countries and over 12 000 trade visitors from 123 countries. The Finnish Pavilion, a specific area for Finnish exhibitors, gathers again this year together several Finnish aviation and airport related companies to exhibit their products and services.

One of the biggest stands in the Finnish Pavilion is the joint stand of Airport Cluster Finland. At the stand 12 cluster member companies unite their forces to promote this Finnish cluster, whose members provide technologies, service solutions and R&D knowhow to airports worldwide. At the same time the companies get an excellent opportunity to present their own knowhow, as well as their product and service portfolios. At least one of the exhibitors will also launch a new application during the event.

On Wednesday 12 October, Airport Cluster Finland will introduce its newest development project, Airport Concepts, in an afternoon seminar. Airport Concepts project aims to combine products and services in a new innovative way creating so called turnkey solutions for airports as the end customers. Interesting speakers and current topics will open up the idea behind the concept thinking, which aims to create benefits, like cost savings, when purchasing products and services to airports. The seminar will also include a panel, during which it is possible to discuss the topics more deeply with the speakers and other seminar participants. The seminar will end with a cocktail event at the Airport Cluster Finland joint stand.

Having altogether 26 member companies, Airport Cluster Finland aims to enhance and support the growth and internationalization of its cluster members. In practice this means, for example, organizing seminars and networking events, and implementing innovative development projects in cooperation with different organizations and the cluster members. At the same time all the activity supports the development of the airport city Aviapolis, the dynamic business environment around Helsinki-Vantaa International Airport.

More information: [www.airportcluster.fi](http://www.airportcluster.fi)

## Attachment 4. Airport Cluster Finland Brochure

Front Page



**Airport Cluster Finland**

Airport Cluster Finland is an active alliance of Finnish companies related to aviation and airport technologies

Airport Cluster Finland represents the expertise of 26 companies related to development of airports and airport regions. Our member companies provide technologies, service solutions and R&D knowhow to airports worldwide.

By organizing seminars, networking events and excursions we enhance and support the growth and internationalization of our member companies. Through various development projects we aim to create new turnkey solutions for airports by combining the products and services of the member companies.

Airport Cluster Finland started its operations in 2009. We are a neutral public and private funded cluster program executed by Vantaa Innovation Institute Ltd.

We welcome all the parties in the industry to communicate and share new innovative ideas together with Airport Cluster Finland to improve quality and functionality of airports.

Read more [www.airportcluster.fi](http://www.airportcluster.fi)

**Powered by:**

Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment VANTAA INNOVATION INSTITUTE

**Member companies:**

Aviation Machine Sensor Center BARRISOL Lemminkäinen VAISALA  
kemira PÖYRY IDMAN ROSTEK exel  
Rapiscan SRV STUDIO ANTTI E TOPTESTER Vammass  
CHAMPIONDOOR FINAVIA TELEESTE EFA FINSECPRO  
Ahkera LIMOWA Marloff MOVENTOR OBELUX



# Airport Cluster Finland



**Development Projects:**

**Airport Concepts, 06/2011-12/2013**

Airport Concepts project aims to develop new innovative service concepts for airports by combining and complementing the products and services of various selected companies in different fields of the airport industry.

In addition to developing new turnkey solutions, the project aims to develop practical tools to strengthen the international business of the participating companies and to strengthen the Finnish airport industry as a whole.

These concepts differ from the traditional airport industry's business model and create benefits such as cost savings when purchasing products and services for airports worldwide.

**Ubiquitous Helsinki-Vantaa, 05/2010-10/2011**

The development project, Ubiquitous Helsinki-Vantaa, studies the exploitation of RFID-technology in the airport environment. At the same time the project aims to secure Helsinki Airport's position and further development as a world's top class hub-airport.

**The project includes two pilots:**

**Pilot 1:** Development of safety and operation models in Helsinki-Vantaa Airport apron area with the use of wireless identification and censoring.

**Pilot 2:** Controlling and optimizing the passenger flow in Helsinki-Vantaa Airport by using RFID and wireless data sharing technologies.

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**Mark Your calendar for Airport Cluster Finland 3rd Annual Seminar 06.06.2012!**

**Want to know more? Contact us!**

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VANTAA INNOVATION INSTITUTE 

## Attachment 5. Thank You Letter



VANTAA INNOVATION INSTITUTE



**Dear Ms/Mr xxx,**

It was a pleasure to meet you at Inter Airport Europe 2011.

For more information about Airport Cluster Finland and our member companies, please visit our website [www.airportcluster.fi](http://www.airportcluster.fi)

We hope to keep in touch and see you at **Airport Cluster Finland 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Seminar at Helsinki-Vantaa the 6<sup>th</sup> of June 2012.**

In the seminar you will find out for example how Airport Concepts –project can develop new innovative solutions by combining products and services to ease purchasing at airports worldwide. Mark your calendar already now and we will keep you posted on the details of the seminar!

Best regards,

Airport Cluster Finland team,

Lotta, Mikko S., Mikko P., Ilmari & Risto

(Contact information available on [www.airportcluster.fi/en/contact/](http://www.airportcluster.fi/en/contact/))

## Attachment 6. Joint Fair Participation Report

### Inter Airport Europe – yhteismessuosallistuminen 11–14.10.2011

Yksi suurimmista lentokenttäalan messutapahtumista, Inter Airport Europe, järjestettiin tänä vuonna Münchenissä 11–14. lokakuuta. Joka toinen vuosi järjestettävässä tapahtumassa oli tällä kertaa mukana yli 600 näytteilleasettajaa 34 eri maasta ja 12 600 vierailijaa eri puolilta maailmaa.

Airport Cluster Finland osallistui tapahtumaan yhdessä 12 jäsenyrityksen kanssa. Tämän lisäksi kuusi klusterin jäsenyritystä oli edustettuina messuilla omilla ständeillään. Airport Cluster Finlandin lähes 50 neliömetrin kokoinen yhteisstandi sijaitsi Suomi paviljongissa, jossa ACF:n lisäksi yhteensä kahdeksan suomalaista yritystä esitteli tuotteitaan ja palveluitaan.

Keskiviikkona 12.10 messujen yhteydessä järjestettiin Airport Concepts –hankkeen avausseminaari, jossa konseptiajattelua esiteltiin n. 40:lle seminaariosallistujalle. Seminaari päättyi Airport Cluster Finland –yhteisosastolla järjestettyyn cocktail-tilaisuuteen, joka houkutteli paikalle runsaat 150 henkeä. Keskiviikkoiltana pidettiin vielä jäsenillallinen yhdessä Danish Airport Groupin kanssa. Airport Cluster Finland jäseniä oli illallisella paikalla 25 ja tanskalaisia 5.

Vaikka yhteisessä messuosallistumisessa oli omat haasteensa, oli suurin osa Airport Cluster Finlandin yhteisosaston näytteilleasettajista tyytyväisiä messuosallistumiseen. Palautetta tapahtumasta, sen järjestelyistä sekä kehitysehdotuksia kerättiin haastatteleamalla lyhyesti mukana olleita yrityksiä. Haastattelujen perusteella voidaan todeta, että yritykset olivat pääosin saavuttaneet messuille asettamansa tavoitteet ja osa jopa ylittäneet odotuksensa. Näytteilleasettajilta saatu kritiikki kohdistui lähinnä osaston rakentamiseen, yksittäisten yritysten palvelu/tuoteinformaation kiteyttämiseen messuosastolla, sekä Airport Cluster Finlandin yhteisen viestin puuttumiseen. Käytännönjärjestelyt saivat lähes yksimielisesti positiivista palautetta.

Kokonaisarvosanaa ensimmäisestä ACF yhteismessutapahtumasta kysyttäessä, järjestelyt saivat keskiarvon 4,6 asteikolla 1-5. Osaston suunnittelu ja toimivuus sen sijaan jättivät ensi kertaa ajatellen hieman parantamisen varaa keskiarvolla 3.

Uusia kontakteja Airport Cluster Finland keräsi neljän päivän aikana yli 200. Osa kontakteista oli hyvinkin hyödyllisiä ja syvempiä keskusteluja käytiin esimerkiksi DAG:in, UK Trade and Investmentin ja Minskin lentokentän edustajien kanssa.



Airport Cluster Finland – yhteisosasto



Airport Concepts -seminaari



Tunnelmia keskiviikon cocktailtilaisuudesta



## Attachment 7. Joint Fair Participation Checklist

### **JOINT FAIR PARTICIPATION CHECKLIST**

#### **Before the fair:**

- Registration for the event
- Stand planner/builder
- Flights and hotel
- Advertising material
  - o Videos
  - o Brochures
  - o Giveaways
- Promotion of upcoming fair participation
  - o ACF website
  - o Member companies
  - o Promotional stickers
  - o Press release
  - o Social media (Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, Google + etc.)
- Invitation of guests
- Freight of marketing materials/equipment etc.
- Catering
  - o clients
  - o staff
- Fair outfits
- Exhibitor passes
- Visitor records
- Additional activities
  - o Evening activities
  - o Competitions / Lucky Draws
    - Forms, bowls, cards etc.
    - Prize(s)
  - o Own seminar
    - Invitation
    - Speakers
    - Confirmation of registration
    - Reminder about the event
  - o Cocktail event

#### **Pack:**

- Business cards
- Computer

- Usb stick with all needed files
- Brochures and giveaways etc. if freight not used
- Pens, paper, tape etc.

**After the fair:**

- Evaluation
- Reporting
- Contact list
- Thank you letters to visitors/co-exhibitors / special guests
- Providing additional information if requested