

READY FOR FIBO 2016?



Brand new halls and a hands-on exploration of the future of the sector. Ralph Scholz, FIBO event director, explains why FIBO 2016 is a must-attend event

For anyone who doesn't know FIBO, how would you describe it?

FIBO is the world's leading event for the fitness industry, embedded in a strong German and European market.

Each April, suppliers and operators from around the world attend the trade fair in Cologne, Germany, to learn about the sector's innovations in a space equivalent to approximately 22 football fields. Last year we welcomed around 136,000 visitors – a quarter of them from abroad, with delegates from around 100 countries.

FIBO is actually three shows in one: FIBO Expert, FIBO Passion and FIBO Power. FIBO Expert is the international business platform for managers, distributors, suppliers, investors and decision-makers in the fitness, wellness and healthcare sectors, with exhibitors including major international players such as Amer Sports/Precor, gym 80, Johnson Health Tech, Life Fitness, MoveToLive and Technogym.

FIBO Passion offers a very special fitness experience for fitness fans, with lots of

opportunities to get actively involved and to shop. FIBO Power is Europe's largest meeting of the bodybuilding, weight training and martial arts community.

What do you believe is so special about FIBO?

It generates momentum for the fitness industry, and it's more international than any other event. The fact that major industry players encourage their global distributor networks to attend FIBO highlights the international significance of the event.

Our aspiration is to be a driver in the market, which means leading the way on up-and-coming issues in a bid to strengthen the industry as a whole. We want to make fitness a fixture in all spheres of society. To that end, we'll be creating the first fitness immersion world at FIBO 2016, with a new Active Hall as part of FIBO Passion. Visitors will get a chance to test different fitness concepts for themselves, rather than just watching them – a way for us to reach new target groups at a consumer level.

An equally important topic for us is the role of fitness in healthcare, and the perception of our sector among policy-makers. The European Health & Fitness Forum (EHFF) – held the day before the trade fair, away from the hustle and bustle of the show – addresses this, bringing together leading figures from the fitness industry, associations, science, politics and healthcare.

When did FIBO first take place, and how has it grown since then?

FIBO was founded in 1985 by Volker Ebener and Kurt Thelen – we celebrated our 30th anniversary last year.

Sixty-nine exhibitors and 10,000 visitors participated in the inaugural event. Lots has changed since then – but not everything. The trade fair still uses the same name today: FIBO, an acronym formed from the words Fitness and BOdybuilding. However, today's tagline – International Trade Fair for Fitness, Wellness and Health – has been selected to align the event with the requirements of the modern era.

In 1985, fitness training was still considered a rather exotic sport. Fitness today is firmly established in society, and issues such as prevention and health rank high in the public psyche. FIBO visitors these days represent a vast range of facilities: fitness studios; health, physiotherapy and rehabilitation centres; spa and wellness facilities; sports clubs; and many more. FIBO has gained lots of new fans over the years.

What's new at the show this year?

This year we'll open two new halls with the aim of providing more space for forward-looking themes. Both FIBO Expert and FIBO Passion 2016 will focus more closely on digitisation of fitness studios. Electrostimulation training (EMS) will feature prominently in Hall 5.2 – the new



FIBO 2016 will feature two new halls, including a special area for mobile devices and wearables

FIBO Expert hall – which will also house a dedicated sports nutrition area. Meanwhile mobile devices and wearables will be located in Hall 4.2 – the FIBO Passion hall.

As I described earlier, FIBO Passion will also get a new Active Hall where manufacturers are tasked with creating a variety of theme worlds. Fitness instructors will supervise the area and provide guidance to visitors who want to try things out for themselves.

Our biggest challenge for FIBO 2016 is definitely how to appropriately depict the digitisation theme. We have to deal with the consequences of so many fitness industry spheres going digital, as well as questioning what it means. What products and ideas exist today, and what challenges are gym operators running into? Exhibitors at FIBO approach this issue from vastly differing perspectives. Our goal is to tie it all together.

How do you balance the distinct needs of your trade and consumer visitors?

Two show days are exclusive trade visitor days – Thursday and Friday. This arrangement allows us to create a pleasant trade fair experience for industry pros and a peaceful ambience for talks. Doing so is more important than ever because of the massive growth in visitor numbers.

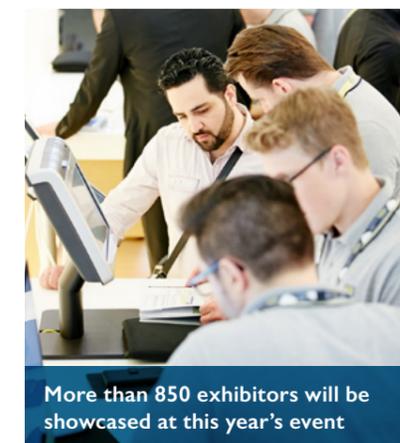
That's why the private visitor programme – FIBO Power stage shows, for example – is cut back on the trade visitor days and why the FIBO Passion Active Hall doesn't even open until the weekend. We created FIBO Expert and FIBO Passion specifically to offer appropriate selections for each target audience. Then, at the weekend,

trade and private visitors alike will have an opportunity to experience all halls, which benefits both groups.

Can you give us some predicted stats for FIBO 2016?

Quantity isn't our primary driver – first and foremost, we care about qualitative growth. This applies equally to the international decision-makers visiting FIBO Expert and to the diverse range of fitness-loving private visitors who bring their purchase power to FIBO Passion. We focus primarily on developing the content of the show and on covering emerging topics.

But I don't want to withhold the numbers: based on our latest forecasts, we expect more than 850 exhibitors in 2016, along with approximately 136,000 visitors again. Occupying 10 halls for the first time, we'll be expanding our exhibition space to 160,000sq m.



More than 850 exhibitors will be showcased at this year's event

Tell us more about the EHFF

In co-operation with EuropeActive, we've put together a one-day summit for the world's top manufacturers and leading European industry experts.

The headline topic this year will be 'Growing the fitness sector through innovation': innovation across all segments is needed to attract more members who'll work out more frequently and more actively. This doesn't just call for new technologies: marketing, sales, finance and human resources must also reinvent themselves.

FIBO China launched last year. Do you have any other exciting plans in the pipeline?

We have additional innovations lined up for 2017, but all in due time. This year we're continuing with our FIBO Innovation Tour, and we're launching a new consumer-focused event series for the German market – FIBO Fitness Festivals – which will take place this summer in four major cities: Hamburg, Berlin, Frankfurt and Munich. Our goal for the festival series is to get even more people excited about fitness, which should contribute to the growth of the industry.

WANT TO VISIT FIBO?

Location: Cologne Messe, Germany
Dates: 6 April (EHFF), 7–10 April (FIBO)
For more info: www.fibo-global.com



As in 2015, around 136,000 visitors are expected at FIBO 2016

