

4. Report from the study:

The offer of services for exhibitors in terms of leisure and other factors increasing the attractiveness of the fairs in Łódź

4.1. Study concept

4.1.1. Study background

The concept of tourism should be understood as – *all activities of persons travelling and staying in places outside their usual environment for a period not exceeding 12 months for leisure, business or other purposes, excluding journeys whose main purpose is gainful employment*¹. Tourism is an important sector of the economy both in Europe and in Poland. The European tourism industry accounts for more than 5% of the EU's GDP, with around 1.8 million companies employing around 5.2% of European workers (approx. 9.7 million jobs). If you take into account the tourism-related sectors, its contribution to GDP is even higher: tourism indirectly generates more than 10% of the EU's GDP and employs about 12% of working population². Also in Poland the tourism sector is developing dynamically which is indicated by the level of tourist expenses. According to estimates of the Institute of Tourism, the share of tourism economy in GDP in 2005 was 5.6%. Expenditure of foreigners in Poland amounted to PLN 20.3 billion, while the expenditure of residents of Poland on domestic trips amounted to PLN 15.7 billion, domestic expenditure of residents of Poland on foreign trips amounted to PLN 4.8 billion, expenditure on business travels amounted to PLN 10.7 billion, while the state expenditure on tourism amounted to PLN 2.7 billion. In total, revenues from the tourism economy amounted to PLN 54.2 billion, representing 5.6% of GDP³. According to forecasts of the Institute of Tourism, the total number of tourists arriving to Poland, which after a drop to 13 million in 2008 and 11.9 million in 2009, will increase to about 13.6 million in 2012 and 2013, and to 14.6 million in 2015⁴.

1.) The methodology of the European Union in the field of tourism statistics, 1998, the Central Statistical Office

2.) http://ec.europa.eu/commission_2010-2014/tajani/hot-topics/tourism/index_pl.htm, accessed: 11/03/2011

3.) Report on tourists' expectations regarding the Podkarpackie market of tourist services, 2007, ASM Market Research and Analysis Centre Team, p. 19

4.) Institute of Tourism, Warsaw, May 2011, <http://www.intur.com.pl/statystyka.htm> accessed 15/09/2011

The basic criterion for the division of tourism is the main motif of the traveling person's journey. The following types of tourism are distinguished: cognitive tourism, leisure tourism, qualified tourism, health tourism, business tourism, religious tourism.

Business tourism is defined by European experts as – *journeys of less than 12 consecutive months, which included participation in: conference, meeting, congress, seminar, trade fair, incentive travel. Trips lasting more than 12 consecutive months and commuting to work are not considered as tourist trips*⁵.

According to the data of the Institute of Tourism, there is a systematic increase in the number of visitors to Poland for business purposes. In 2007 it accounted for 25% of all arrivals to our country. At the same time, the expenses related to business visits constitute one of the highest expenditure categories, reaching \$319 per person, with \$323 per person being the expenses of the participants of conference and congresses⁶.

In the UK, for example, the fair and conference sector accounts for £18.8 million in revenue, including the expenses associated with events. Business tourists spend an average of £131 a day, which is 72% more than the daily expenses of a tourist arriving in the UK for leisure purposes. With such a fast operating sector, 25,000 businesses operate within the business tourism industry, including event organisers, trade fair and conference facilities managers, specialised marketing companies etc. It is estimated that the sector allows to maintain around 530,000 jobs⁷.

Based on observations of the situation in developed European countries (including the countries in our climate zone) and economic experts' forecasts, in the coming years the service sector will develop at a faster pace than the entire economy and tourism will be one of the fastest growing segments of this sector. As the services sector's share in the Polish economy is lower than in the developed countries, it should be assumed that it will develop much faster than industry or agriculture. This means that in the coming years the tourism economy in Poland has a chance to develop at a faster pace than the growth rate of the entire Polish economy (measured by the GDP growth rate).

Although the presented data and forecasts confirm the importance of the tourism sector, especially business tourism, for the economy as a whole, and the Łódź Voivodeship through its central location and traditions has the potential that the business tourism sector contribute significantly to the development and promotion of the region, however, according to the report of the Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry for 2009, Łódź is only the sixth city in terms of the number of fair visitors, after Poznań, Kielce, Warsaw, Kraków and Lublin. According to information from the websites, in 2012 more than 60 trade fairs are planned to take place in Kielce, while in Łódź it is about 20 fairs⁸.

5.) The methodology of the European Union in the field of tourism, 1998, the Central Statistical Office, Warsaw p.13.

6.) Business tourism in Poland report, 2007, Institute of Tourism, Warsaw, p. 7

7.) Britain for Events-raport, 2010, Business Visits and Events Partnership, p. 4

8.) www.mtl.lodz.pl, www.targikielce.pl accessed 17/11/2011

In 2009 Międzynarodowe Targi Łódzkie Sp. z o.o. organised 11 trade fair events which were attended by only 42 foreign exhibitors⁹⁾. Moreover, although, as in previous years, the most often indicated reason of coming to Łódź in 2010 were business issues, their share fell by almost half (from about 1/4 to 1/7) in comparison to 2009¹⁰⁾.

One of the measures of effectiveness of the Łódź Voivodeship Strategy for 2007-2020, in the economic sphere (increasing the competitive position of the voivodeship's economy) in priority area 6 (image) is the number of persons using hotels in the voivodeship¹¹⁾. One of the possible ways of achieving such a state is to develop business tourism, especially in connection with participation in trade fair events.

Each of the well-organised and well-promoted trade fair events causes the effect of a snowball not only for the organiser of the trade fair itself but also for the service providers from the tourism industry and related services.

Taking into account the above, the aim of this research project was to develop recommendations for trade fair industry and companies from the trade fair environment for the development of the fair sector, including tourist industry. In particular, the project involved an attempt to identify sources of competitive advantage on the fair market and verify the thesis that the creation of an offer in terms of free time tailored to the exhibitors' needs will contribute to increasing the attractiveness of the event, fair centre and, as a result, the city as well.

The applicability of the conducted study was based on collecting and analyzing information on those activities which in Łódź and in leading trade fair locations of Poland as well as selected centres abroad are perceived by the exhibitors as desirable and increasing the attractiveness of the trade fair offer as well as the accompanying tourist offer and related services. The needs of exhibitors were examined in terms of the offer of spending free time after the trade fair event as well as their opinions on the overall perception of the fair centre and the city where the events took place. The research project also allowed to learn the opinions of persons managing trade fair centres, and at the same time companies organizing trade fair events, about what constitutes a source of competitive advantage, the greatest challenges and how to increase the attractiveness of trade fair events. Conclusions from the study and recommendations developed on the basis of good practices from leading trade fair centres in Poland and the UK should therefore be interesting in terms of possible implementations for:

- Międzynarodowe Targi Łódzkie - as the manager shaping the development strategy of the trade fair facility and being able to coordinate the efforts of other entities in order to provide the exhibitors with the best possible perception of the trade fair offer and leisure activities offer, and also as the organiser of trade fairs;

9.) Exhibition events by Międzynarodowe Targi Łódzkie in 2009, 2010, CSO

10.) Tourist traffic in Łódź and the Łódź Voivodeship in 2010, collective work edited by Bogdan Włodarczyk, 2011
Łódź, p. 53

11.) Strategy of the Łódź Voivodeship for 2007- 2012

- Individuals and organisations responsible for the city's image in the eyes of visitors;
- Other trade fair organisers - as companies directly responsible for the shape of the fair trade offer directed to the exhibitor and benefiting directly from positive experience of exhibitors after the trade fairs, which is a factor that makes it more likely to take part again in the next year's event and support for creating a positive image of the trade fair event in a given branch;
- Companies from the tourist industry (tour operators) and the hospitality, catering and recreational industries as well as cultural institutions;
- interdisciplinary, it integrates multiple service providers; maybe the role of facilitator or integrator of such cooperation can be served by a tourist organisation promoting its own business and implementing the statutory objectives at the same time;

4.1.2. Conceptual apparatus

For the purpose of this study, the following way of defining the terms has been adopted (the following are own definitions or their source is provided):

Offer of leisure time services: an offer of organised time for exhibitors during a fair event, usually after the fair's hours. Its scope has been defined in the exhibitors' survey and may include the following groups of services:

- Related to accommodation (hotels and other forms of accommodation);
- Related to transportation (taxi services etc.);
- Enabling exploring the city and region (tour operators, museums, organisers of local attractions, etc.);
- Recreational (sports facilities, spa etc.);
- Food services (restaurants, pubs, etc.);
- Culture and entertainment (theatres, philharmonics, cinemas, concert halls, etc.);
- Other services indicated by the exhibitors.

Attractiveness of the trade fairs: for the purpose of the study is understood as:

- In the eyes of the exhibitors: *as an overall satisfaction with the participation in the event and declared at a given moment of time willingness to recommend participation in the fair to business partners.*

To measure this variable Net Promoter Score was adopted, which indicates how much the exhibitors are willing to recommend a given trade fair centre to their contractors. Indication of the degree of recommending the centre on a ten-degree scale (from 1 - the exhibitor will definitely not recommend the centre, to 10 - the exhibitor will definitely recommend the centre). Indication of 9 or 10 means that the overall experience of the client, which in this case is the exhibitor, has actually met or even exceeded his/her expectations.

The applied meter of recommending the company to other users allows to draw conclusions as to the degree of satisfaction and, consequently, long-term possible customer loyalty⁽¹²⁾.

Fair trade offer: *all those services paid for by the exhibitor as part of the fair fee and which are closely related to activities during the hours of the event (e.g. stand design, internet, catering, advertising in the exhibitors' catalogue, etc.).*

Providers offering leisure time services: *for the purpose of the study, a group of providers of services identified by exhibitors in the needs survey (companies from the tourism, catering and recreational industry, etc.).*

The needs of exhibitors:

- In the context of the trade fair event;
- In the context of spending leisure time outside the time of staying at the trade fair facility.

Exhibitor: *a company taking part in an exhibition event and informing there about its products or services in order to gain customers.*

Fair visitor: *a natural person visiting a consumer trade fair or a representative of a company visiting a business fair.*

Fair organiser: *a company responsible for the overall organisation of the event.*

Fair facility: *a company managing the trade fair facility, usually such company is also the organiser of trade fairs held in a given facility.*

Tourism: *all activities of persons travelling and staying in places outside their usual environment for a period not exceeding 12 months for leisure, business or other purposes, excluding journeys whose main purpose is gainful employment⁽¹³⁾.*

Business tourism: *these are journeys made by employees and others as part of their work activities, including participation in such meetings as: conferences, conventions, congresses, trainings, seminars, fairs, exhibitions and incentive events⁽¹⁴⁾.*

Trade fairs and exhibitions: *Presentation of products or services to the invited public in order to inform visitors and stimulate sales. Trade fairs and exhibitions are a vital part of the business tourism sector as they stimulate to travelling (both exhibitors and visitors) and generate demand for tourist services⁽¹⁵⁾.*

12.) Reichfeld F., The One Number You Need to Grow, 2003, Harvard Business Review

13.) The methodology of the European Union in the field of tourism statistics, 1998, the Central Statistical Office

14.) Methodology of research and pilot study of business tourism, 2003, Institute of Tourism, Warsaw p. 38

15.) Methodology of research and pilot study of business tourism, 2003, Institute of Tourism, Warsaw p. 13)

4.1.3. The scope and limitations of the study

Consideration should be given to the limitations of the study which may affect the results obtained. The scope of the study was also taken into account when drawing conclusions from the results, however, it should be remembered that the primary objective of the study is its applicability, i.e. the possibility to propose specific recommendations that could be implemented.

The scope of the study can be seen in the context of the following categories:

- Geographical
 - United Kingdom: London (individual in-depth interviews with managers);
 - Poland: Łódź, Poznań, Kielce.
- Type of trade fairs:
 - Time: events taking place in the second half of 2011 in the above mentioned cities in Poland;
 - Duration: two-day events;
 - Target group: targeted at individual and business customers.
- Target groups in the study:
 - Managers of fair facilities (London, Łódź, Poznań, Kielce)
 - Exhibitors (companies participating in fairs in the three mentioned locations in Poland)

It should be emphasized that the study was descriptive in nature and its aim is not to define regularities on the fair market (formulation of general conclusions), but only to provide the basis for the creation of application-related recommendations that can be implemented by companies and institutions. Three exhibition centres were deliberately selected for the study, Łódź due to the applicability of the project for the region, Poznań and Kielce as two centres which together hold over 80% of the fair market, and thus they probably have good practices which allowed them to achieve such a position. Due to time and human resources limitations, the research was conducted during three selected (according to the criterion of implementation capabilities) trade fair events. In view of the main objective and applicability of the study, it was considered that the study should be treated in a descriptive way and that its results cannot be generalised over the entire group of exhibitors. Nevertheless, the data and conclusions obtained during the research process can be useful in defining key success factors in the analysed area.

4.2. Objectives of the study

4.2.1. The main objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to define the factors influencing the attractiveness of the trade fair event and allowing the exhibition centre and fair organiser to distinguish themselves on the market as well as to assess whether providing the exhibitors with an offer of leisure time activities during the trade fair event may be one of the factors contributing to increasing the attractiveness of the trade fair and to what extent it may be a response to the exhibitors' needs.

As a result of research based on the collection of best practices from London (mature exhibition market), Poznań and Kielce (the leading trade fair centres in the country), recommendations which can be implemented in Łódź will be proposed.

4.2.2. The specific objectives of the study

In order to facilitate the implementation of the main objective, detailed objectives have been defined, to which particular questions contained in the research tools refer.

The specific objectives of the study are listed below:

- Determining what constitutes the competitive advantage of the fair facility and organiser on the fair market in Poland and in the UK?
- Determining what are the exhibitors' needs in terms of the offer of leisure time services during a trade fair event? How to create the most suitable offer for exhibitors and how should it be passed on to customers?
- Determining whether and what is the possible impact of the existence of such an offer on the growth of the attractiveness of the trade fairs in Łódź?

The following are the specific objectives in the context of particular groups of persons under research or types of sources (primary or secondary).

4.2.2.1. Specific objectives United Kingdom - desk research

- Verification of the image of the UK fair market taking into account competitive advantage factors on the market for both fair organisers and trade fair facilities.
- Verification whether the British fair centres offer, through the websites, suggestions to exhibitors on spending free time in terms of tourist and recreation attractions, hotel services, catering and cultural events. If such an offer was placed on the website, the verification of what was within its scope. The information collected was verified and deepened through case studies interviews.
- The ultimate goal was to collect and recommend the best solutions from the British market that could be implemented in Łódź.

4.2.2.2. Specific objectives Specific objectives: United Kingdom - case studies

Specific objectives that have been achieved during case studies:

- Gain insight into the functioning mechanisms of the UK trade fair sector, taking into account competitive advantage factors on the market for the fair facility and the organiser on the basis of specific cases of companies analysed.

- Verification whether the described cases included an offer for exhibitors and/or trade fair guests, i.e. proposals for spending leisure time, such as tourist attractions, recreation, hotel services, catering and cultural events.
- The ultimate goal was to collect and recommend the best solutions from the British market that could be implemented in Łódź.

4.2.2.3. Specific objectives: Poland - desk research

The specific objectives that have been set before this phase of the study are as follows:

- Verification of the image of the fair market in Poland taking into account the competitive advantage factors for trade fair centres.
- Verification whether the Polish trade fair organisers and/or exhibition centres offer, through the websites, suggestions to customers on spending leisure time in terms of tourist and recreation attractions, hotel services, catering and cultural events. If such an offer is posted on the website, the verification of what is within its scope and how exhibitors can take advantage of it. The information collected has been deepened by IDI with managers of fair facilities.
- The ultimate goal was to gather and recommend ideas possible to be implemented in Łódź based on the best practices of the leading trade fair centres in Poland.

4.2.2.4. Specific objectives Poland - individual in-depth interviews with managers of fair facilities who simultaneously organise trade fair events in their own facilities

- Gaining insight into the mechanisms of operation of the trade fair sector in Poland, taking into account competitive advantage factors on the market from the perspective of the fair facility which sometimes plays a dual role and is also responsible for the organisation of the trade fair event.
- Verification whether in the cases described there is an offer for exhibitors, i.e. proposals for spending leisure time, e.g. tourist attractions, recreation, hotel, catering and cultural events.
- The ultimate goal is to collect and recommend ideas that can be implemented by the trade fairs in Łódź on the basis of solutions applied by market leaders (Międzynarodowe Targi Poznańskie, Targi Kielce).

4.2.2.5. Specific objectives Poland - questionnaire interviews with exhibitors

Exhibitors are a group of customers of the trade fair centre who, on the one hand, directly use services offered as part of the trade fair event. Assessing business results and their own financial possibilities, they decide whether or not to participate in the next edition of the event.

On the other hand, they are also customers who have specific needs as to spending time after the fair, they evaluate the attractiveness of the city and contact their individual or business customers to ensure that their needs are also met.

Therefore, the specific objective of studying this group is

- Verification of the exhibitors' needs in terms of trade fair offer and the offer of spending free time as well as what impact such offer has or would have on their evaluation of the attractiveness of the trade fair event.
- Verification of how exhibitors evaluate particular aspects related to the trade fair centre, trade fair offer, city, etc.

4.3. Research questions

4.3.1. Research questions: United Kingdom - desk research

- What are the main elements of the widely understood offer for exhibitors communicated through the websites of the organisers / fair facilities?
- Are the trade fair facilities in the UK also trade fair organisers or these roles are separate?
- Is it possible to find information about the city's tourist offer and information about recreation, catering, cultural events, etc. on the websites of trade fair organisers/facilities?
- Does the fact of being a fair exhibitor/guest can help to get a discount on the local attractions recommended by the fair organisers/facilities??
- Do the fair organisers/facilities facilitate hotel reservations for exhibitors or facilitate transport to the fair place in any way?

4.3.2. Research questions: United Kingdom - individual in-depth interviews with managers of the trade fair facilities

- How does the process of creating a fair event look like and what is the role of the fair facility in this process?
- What are the biggest current challenges for fair facility?
- What can the trade fair facility do to effectively stand out on the market and attract organisers and exhibitors?
- What is included in the offer of spending free time for exhibitors?
- How the exhibitor is informed about it?
- How does the fair facility benefit from such an offer?
- Are the needs of exhibitors and satisfaction after the trade fair examined?

4.3.3. Research questions: Poland - desk research

- What are the characteristics of these three researched centres: Łódź, Poznań i Kielce?
- What are the main elements of the widely understood offer for exhibitors communicated through the websites of fair facilities?
- Which objects are also fair trade fair organisers, and where these roles are separated?
- Is it possible to find information about the city's tourist offer and information about recreation, catering, cultural events, etc. on the websites of trade fair facilities?

4.3.4. Research questions: Poland - individual in-depth interviews with managers of the trade fair facilities

- How does the process of creating a fair event look like and what is the role of the fair facility in this process?
- What are the sources of competitive advantage in the trade fair market?
- What are the biggest current challenges for fair centres?
- What is included in the offer of spending free time for exhibitors?
- How does the fair centre cooperate with the city?
- Whether and how the centre examines customer satisfaction after the trade fair?

4.3.5. Research questions: Poland - questionnaire interviews with exhibitors

- What is the overall level of satisfaction with the trade fair event?
- How does the exhibitor assess particular aspects related to the trade fair centre in which the event takes place?
- How does the exhibitor assess particular aspects related to the perception of the city?
- Did the exhibitor receive an offer in terms of spending leisure time?
- How and when is such an offer communicated?
- Did the exhibitor use it?
- What the exhibitor would like to receive as part of this offer in the future?
- How important in the overall assessment of an event by the exhibitor is the fact of receiving an offer of spending leisure time?

4.4. Methodology of the study

4.4.1. Model of the study

In order to achieve the main objective and detailed objectives, the following model of the study has been developed (Table 1).

Table 1. Overview of the study

Specific objective - research question	Surveyed persons	Research technique
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the competitive advantage of the fair facility and fair organiser in Poland and in the UK?	Managers of fair centre in Poland and in the UK	Individual in-depth interviews with managers.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the exhibitors' needs in terms of what is offered by the trade fair organiser?	Exhibitors in Poland	Questionnaire interviews with exhibitors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How to create the most suitable offer for exhibitors and how should it be passed on to customers?		Questionnaire interviews with exhibitors
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the possible impact of such an offer on:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Increased attractiveness of trade fairs in Łódź	Conclusions based on the conducted research	

Source: Own elaboration

4.4.2. Data sources

Depending on the implementation of the specific objective and the research project stage, various data sources have been used.

Secondary sources: available reports, studies, research results from the Polish and British market

Primary sources: data obtained from direct interviews with managers and through questionnaire interviews conducted with exhibitors

4.4.3. Research methods and techniques

In the research process various methods (quantitative and qualitative) and research techniques were applied:

Desk research

In the course of the study, available reports, studies and research results from the Polish and British markets were analysed. Despite its defectiveness(e.g. predefined scope of information), the knowledge contained in the secondary sources is valuable and relatively cheap to obtain.

Individual in-depth interviews with managers

In view of the specific nature of the discussed topic, it is important to gather in-depth knowledge about the sector from persons responsible for shaping the strategy of trade fairs development. In direct conversation, it was possible to gain better knowledge of the phenomena studied in order to extract these aspects in the area of which it is possible to give recommendations to be implemented in Łódź.

Questionnaire interviews with exhibitors

For exhibitors it was decided to use short interviews during which the tool was filled in the form of a questionnaire previously verified in the pilot study. Thanks to such a tool, it was possible to gather data from a larger number of fair market participants in three exhibition centres.

4.4.4. A detailed description of the research tools and a description of their use

Desk research

In order to achieve detailed objectives concerning the Polish market, among others, the reports presented below were used and information on the websites:

- Tourist traffic in Łódź and the Łódź Voivodeship in 2010, collective work edited by Bogdan Włodarczyk, Łódź, 2011
- The impact of the financial crisis on the current business activity and perspectives of the fair industry in Poland, management summary, concept and management: Dr. Jerzy Kuczyński, Centrum Ekspertyz Gospodarczych Fundacji Akademii Ekonomicznej sp. z o.o in Poznań, July 2009
- Tourism in 2009, GUS, Warsaw 2010.
- <http://www.polfair.com.pl> - Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry
- <http://www.poland.gov.pl/> - official promotional website of the Republic of Poland
- http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/eden/what-is-eden/index_pl.htm - European Destinations of Excellence - a project promoting sustainable tourism development models throughout the European Union
- <http://www.rotwl.pl/> - Regional Tourism Organisation

In the context of studying secondary sources in the United Kingdom, e.g the following reports and information contained on websites were analysed:

- <http://www.visitbritain.com/en/GB/>
- <http://www.intute.ac.uk> - British Association of Conference Destinations
- <http://www.iccaworld.com/> - International Congress & Convention Association
- <http://www.mia-uk.org/> - Meeting Industry Association
- UK Conference Market Survey - a report prepared by NFO Transport and Tourism
The 2006 UK Conference Market Survey report prepared by the Meetings Industry Association
- http://www.ufi.org/Public/Default.aspx?Clef_SITESMAPS=142&Clef_SITESMAPS=144 - The Global Association of Exhibition Industry

Scenario of an individual in-depth interview

The survey was conducted in the form of individual in-depth interviews. An interview scenario was constructed to carry out the survey, including a scheme of thematic topics discussed during the interview, in order to obtain as much detailed information as possible. The topics included:

- Elements of the offer for exhibitors;
- Methods for measuring the quality of services provided;
- Identification of the factors of competitive advantage and the current challenges in the trade fair sector.

Questions were open.

The interview questionnaire

In the case of exhibitors, a tool completed by the respondent during shortened interviews with exhibitors was used, in order to obtain data from a larger sample than it would be possible to do so during in-depth interviews.

The following tools have been included in the report:

- In English: a scenario of individual in-depth interviews with the managers of the fair facilities;
- In Polish: a scenario of individual in-depth interviews with the managers of the fair facilities;
- In Polish: questionnaire for exhibitors completed during short interviews.

4.4.5. Study scheme

Table 2. Study scheme

Study phase	Tool	The subjects and sample size
1	Desk research (United Kingdom)	Not applicable
2	Desk research (Poland)	Not applicable
3	Piloting of research tools	3 exhibitors in 1 centre (Łódź) and 1 manager (London) and 1 expert in the trade fair industry in Poland (representative of the fair organisation)
4	Individual in-depth interviews with managers (United Kingdom, London)	2 managers

5	Individual in-depth interviews with exhibitors (Łódź, Poznań, Kielce)	A total of 90 exhibitors (30 in 3 exhibition centres)
6	Individual in-depth interviews with managers (Łódź, Poznań, Kielce)	3 managers

Source: own elaboration

4.4.6. Methods of sampling

As indicated earlier, the sample was purposefully selected. The study covered persons who due to their knowledge, experience and position will be able to provide the necessary information for the study (managers) and exhibitors taking part in events within a specified time period and at selected locations.

In the UK, specific companies have been selected on a purposeful basis, an example of which was considered a potential source of good practice that could be applied in Łódź.

4.4.7. Methods and tools used in the analysis of data, along with the reasons for their selection

As the study is primarily of a qualitative nature, its results will be presented in a descriptive form. On the other hand, the data obtained in the questionnaire interviews with exhibitors were presented numerically in those fragments where it was possible, however, it should be noted that the results cannot be considered as representative. In addition to the description, a spreadsheet was also used to compile the results.

4.5. Organization of the study

4.5.1. Methods of ensuring the reliability of the study

- Issues to the interview with managers

As part of the pilot phase, in order to select the most relevant issues which were then discussed in individual in-depth interviews, an initial outline of the scenario was discussed with a single manager of the trade fair industry in the UK and an expert of the trade fair industry (a representative of the trade fair organisation) in Poland.

- The questionnaire for surveying exhibitors

The piloting of the tool has been conducted through 3 questionnaire interviews with exhibitors in one location at a separate fair event. On the basis of feedback, improvements were made to the design of the questionnaire so that the formulations were more accurate and understandable for the exhibitors.

4.5.2. Schedule of the study

Table 3. Schedule of the study

Type of study	Research subjects	Name of the trade fair	Place	Date of the study
Desk research on the Polish and British markets	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable	April-May 2011
Piloting of the research tools (issues for individual interviews with managers)	1 manager (London) <small>And 1 expert from the trade fair industry in Poland (a representative of the trade fair organisation)</small>	Not applicable	Not applicable	May 2011
Piloting of the research tools (questionnaire for exhibitors)	3 exhibitors	Bocuse d'Or Fairs	Łódź	August 2011
Individual in-depth interviews	Managers of trade fair centres, exhibitors	Interviews arranged individual	Poznań, Łódź, Kielce	September
Questionnaire interviews	Exhibitors	Natura Food Łódź, Piękne Wnętrze Kielce, Polagra Poznań	Poznań, Łódź, Kielce	September - October 2011

Source: Own elaboration

Guidelines for future research

The studies carried out within the project may be a starting point for further research which could cover more (preferably all) trade fair centres. The study may include also trade fair visitors as recipients of the leisure time offer. In addition, following the implementation of recommendations on the offer of tourism, recreation, catering, etc., according to the identified needs of the exhibitors, it is recommended to examine companies providing these services in order to check whether they note increased financial revenues during trade fair events.

4.6. Presentation of research results

4.6.1. Presentation of the results of individual in-depth interviews with managers in Poland

The survey was conducted in the form of individual in-depth interviews with persons at managerial positions in three trade fair centres in Poland (Łódź, Poznań, Kielce). Interviews were held in August and September this year. The interviews were unstructured, however, they dealt with specific issues contained in the general interview scenario. Below is an analysis of the results of respondents' responses in the context of the major thematic areas.

4.6.1.1. Sources of competitive advantage

Respondent no. 1 mentions three sources of competitive advantage:

- Satisfaction of the visitor, because it is the customer who is currently the "king at the fair".

The respondent is of the opinion that in order to do so we should learn from the visitors what they need and what would make them willing to come to the fair.

- In the respondent's company, gathering information for the creation of an event begins with a market analysis in order to find thematic niches. Next, it is verified in a given branch whether the selected theme of the trade fair is needed and on this basis the event is created. It is worth noticing that although the respondent believes that the visitor is the most important, the presented process of creating an event does not take into account the information obtained from it.
- Infrastructure, which means preparation for the trade fair event in terms of logistics and location. It is important that everything that is needed to organise the fair was at the fair venue. However, according to the respondent, this is not a dominant factor in gaining an advantage in the market.
- Value proposition for the visitor - the respondent emphasizes that also a properly created and communicated (both through the way and the appropriate channels) customer value proposition is very important, i.e. the sum of all the benefits that the visitor will receive -
*"If the trade fair is well-profiled, if there is a specific offer directed to a particular recipient and that the visitor knows that when arriving here he or she will have certain benefits, it must be successful"*¹⁶.

Respondent no. 2 mentions three sources of competitive advantage:

- Youth of the trade fair is defined as the basic skills of employees, i.e. creation, openness, creativity, spontaneous activities. All of these factors constitute a competitive advantage over other centres in Poland which due to their longer presence on the market have negative historical factors, in default managers and staff, and consequently, also non-modern organisational culture.
- Infrastructure - modernized and newly erected facilities built taking into account special needs of trade fair events.
- Management resulting from the ownership structure. According to the respondent, almost 100% of the city's share in the trade fair management company ensures safety and easy decision making due to the fact that the trade fair is a city-forming factor. Thanks to the fair, the city is developing and it is a generator of various services in the city. In addition, the city, as the owner of the fair, develops the infrastructure surrounding the trade fair and gives permission for the activities of various companies associated with the fair.

Respondent no. 3 mentions four sources of competitive advantage:

- Location in the country, region and in the city. Of course, Warsaw is beyond any competition as the capital of the country.

16.) Interview with manager of a trade fair centre, September 2011

The respondent divided groups of visitors into business groups and individual visitors. For business groups it is more advantageous if the trade fair is located outside the city centre, in a place with good access from the main national routes and possibly near the airport. On the other hand, it is more advantageous for individual customers if the trade fair is well communicated via the urban transport system with every part of the city. Therefore, it would be best if the fair is located in the city centre.

- Infrastructure - defined by the respondent as providing a large hall for large trade fairs (on the Polish scale) without the need to use tents.
- The level of prices of trade fair space - the respondent complains that a price war is taking place on the Polish market among the trade fair organisers and companies managing trade fair centres, leading in extreme cases to setting dumped prices. Often events with the same subject matter are organised at the same time, but the respondent did not see this as a normal situation of market fight for the consumer.
- Thematic purity of the fair event - defined as exhibiting at an event only by organisations from the branch for which the trade fair was dedicated. This factor is mainly important for business customers.

4.6.1.2. The biggest current challenges for the trade fair centres and organisers

Respondent no. 1 indicates a challenge for the trade fair, the Internet which was supposed to replace face-to-face meetings with virtual transactions. The respondent points out, however, that the trade fair as a wider tool for building relations has met this challenge, even when faced with the need to compete with other customer communication tools, because it gives value in the form of face-to-face meetings with the customer and the industry. Currently, the biggest challenge for the fair is to get information about customer needs (especially to the exhibitor), and to meet them most effectively through appropriately adjusted events. On the one hand, there is an element of gaining knowledge about the customer, and on the other hand, the company tries to turn this knowledge into a product offered, i.e. a trade fair event.

For respondent no. 2, the challenge is to de-personalize business contacts, which is associated with the use of the Internet. The respondent recognizes that the trade fair is a tool of presentation and negotiation, and according to the respondent these actions are most effective in personal contact, so the centre seeks to break the tendency to virtualize contacts. Another problem of the trade fair branch, noticed by respondent 2, is the unspecified status of many events currently organised. In the respondent's opinion, there are many offers that are not eligible to be called "fairs" without meeting the standards that characterise the trade fair event. The respondent notes the negative impact of such practices on the acquisition of foreign customers who are thus misled. As an antidote to this situation, the respondent proposes the introduction of national standards or regulations conferring the name of the "fair" only to events satisfying certain criteria, which guarantees an appropriate quality to the

“
customer.

Respondent 3 considers that the biggest challenge is a good trade fair infrastructure and that events should take place in a suitably adapted facility with sufficient storage space in a good location.

The conditions of the facility should allow to organise a conference next to the trade fair event. However, the respondent does not intend to compete with the leading centres in terms of the size of the facility. At the same time, insufficient infrastructure is the main negative factor for exhibitors today. As an answer to the challenge of the Internet, the company is in the course of preparing the virtual trade fair project which is intended to supplement the real fair event. The respondent sees the virtual trade fair as a contradiction to the idea of a direct meeting.

4.6.1.3. Customer satisfaction survey

Respondent no. 1 declares that the research is conducted on a regular basis. Its aim is to obtain information about the customer's needs in order to adapt the offer to it. The research process starts with the determination of the study area and its scale. Depending on this, the company decides whether the research will be carried using its own resources or with the help of external companies. Customer satisfaction surveys are carried out by means of conversations during direct meetings or by telephone.

Respondent no. 2 declares that both exhibitors and visitors are examined using the survey method. The aim is to obtain information allowing the events to be organised in such a way as to ensure customer satisfaction, while the verification covers both the evaluation of the services provided by the trade fair as an organiser and centre, as well as the services offered in the city and region. Already at the stage of measuring customer satisfaction it is evident that the respondent believes that the trade fair fits into a broader context of perception of the city and region. The company conducts the research itself and commissions more extensive research at selected events to institutions (including the local university). The surveys carried out by the company have the form of a questionnaire consisting of several open and closed questions. While random surveys carried out by institutions refer also to customers' plans for the future and allow to develop perspective of fair development, associated costs and planned expenses.

Respondent no. 3 has no knowledge about effective methods of customer satisfaction research. The respondent refers Promotion Manager for information. The respondent recognizes that customer satisfaction survey is an important post-fair element, but according to the respondent this is an aspect that is difficult to measure due to the fact that exhibitors does not approach the research seriously and does not provide well-thought-out answers. The respondent's statement may prove that maybe the centre has not taken into account exhibitors' comments in the past and, therefore, they have no motivation to share their opinions again or questions were not properly formulated. Perhaps the limited knowledge about customers' opinions, despite the recognition that having this knowledge is important, results in less possibility to meet customers' needs and, as a result, worse market position. This may indicate that there is a competence gap in customers' needs research and customers' satisfaction research.

4.6.1.4. The offer of leisure activities for exhibitors

1 Respondent emphasizes a different approach that the company applies to visitors and exhibitors as regards the proposal of spending free time. The company, through the visitor registration system, gained knowledge of the fact that most visitors come only for one day of the fair, so according to the respondent there is little potential for these visitors to take advantage of the tourist offer, possibly only from the gastronomic one.

Based on the knowledge of the customer's preferences, the company is able to offer what the customer can actually benefit from during the trade fair day. As regards exhibitors who spend a lot more time at the trade fair, the company cooperates with city institutions providing tourist attractions, while for its part it organises networking branch evenings (refreshments, performance) for which exhibitors can also invite key customers. The starting point is an early conversation with exhibitors and adaptation of the offer to the needs of a given branch. In this case, the offer of spending free time is also proposed only after obtaining insight into customer needs in this regard.

Respondent 2 declares close cooperation with the organisers of leisure time in the city. Cooperation with cultural, catering institutions and hotels is aimed at preparing a special offer for fair visitors and exhibitors. The institutions prepare a special offer with a higher standard of service and, e.g. foreign language support, a special artistic or thematic programme is often prepared as well. On the other hand, the fair company organises evenings for the exhibitors which are closely related to the fair's programme (e.g. award ceremony), connected with the artistic program and refreshments.

Respondent 3 admits that the offer in terms of leisure time may be added value for exhibitors but above all, the offer of a given region or city is important. The respondent also emphasizes the aspect of cost availability of the city, where Poznań has a bad position due to hotel prices, while Łódź has a better one because hotels are cheaper and the standard is higher. The respondent claims that an attractive and relatively cheap offer of hotels makes the fair more and more popular. The argument is also a large number of catering and entertainment facilities. The company organises banquets for exhibitors, but at the same time it notices expectations of additional attractions (they have been abandoned due to the costs). The respondent claims that tourist attractions (sightseeing the city) are preferred only by a small group of exhibitors and the majority of them are interested in recreational forms or extreme elements (e.g. parachute jumps, etc.).

4.6.1.5. Cooperation with the city

Respondent no. 1 emphasized close cooperation with the city as the owner, but could not mention the concrete results of the joint activities. The respondent pointed out only vaguely that at the trade fair “we host various initiatives that come to us from the city”⁽¹⁷⁾.

Respondent no. 2 emphasized the important role of cooperation between the fair centre and the city, which is also its owner. In the respondent's opinion, there are many advantages that these two entities are providing each other with, and consequently contributing to the development of the whole region. Firstly, trade fairs are one of the economic pillars of the region. Thanks to events organised, every year the city is visited by representatives of several tens of thousands of companies and hundreds of thousands of tourists. This means a significant increase in revenue for the city as the owner, but also for residents and local businesses. According to the respondent, the city is making good use of this interest and promotes itself as a perfect place to spend a vacation or a family weekend.

17.) Interview with manager of a trade fair centre, September 2011

According to a study carried out by the fair centre, a significant proportion of customers visiting the trade fair return later as part of holiday tourism. Moreover, in addition to cooperation with the Municipal Office, the trade fair centre also has very good relations with the Marshal's Office as well as with other organisations aiming at the development of the region, such as the association of municipalities and districts. These institutions, on the one hand, use trade fair events for their promotion and, on the other hand, promote trade fairs.

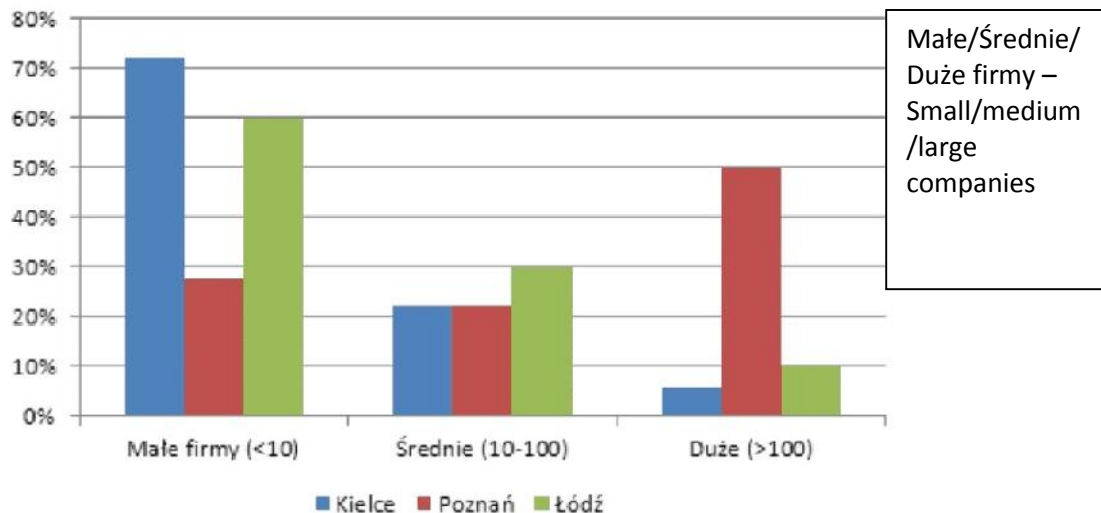
In turn, according to respondent no. 3, cooperation with the city which owns the fair facility is not as good as it could potentially be. However, the respondent could not specify exactly what it would expect from the city. He only pointed out that the cooperation with the Marshal's Office works well because the Office contributes significantly to the organisation of two major trade fairs.

4.6.2. Presentation of questionnaire results in Poland

The results of the questionnaire survey conducted among exhibitors are presented below in total and divided into individual exhibition centres.

4.6.2.1. Characteristics of the companies participating in the survey

A total of 90 exhibitors correctly completed the questionnaire. The smallest companies were the largest part of them (up to 10 employees) - 52%, and the same number of medium and large companies - 24% each.



Graph 1. Percentage share of companies of various sizes in individual cities.

Source: Own calculations based on data available at the CSO.

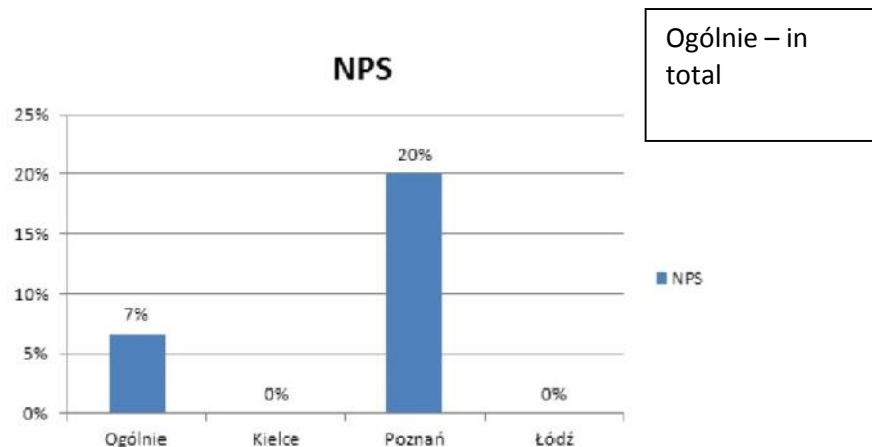
For the purposes of the survey, medium enterprises were characterized as employing from 10 to 100 employees, and large companies as employing over 100 employees. Detailed characteristics of companies in particular cities are presented in Graph 1.

Exhibitors from Kielce in the last three years exhibited mostly in Kielce, Poznań, Łódź and Warsaw. While exhibitors from Poznań most often took part in trade fair events in Poznań, Wrocław and Warsaw, and abroad in Berlin, Moscow and Chicago. Exhibitors from Łódź most often participated in trade fairs in Warsaw, Łódź and Poznań, and abroad in Brussels, Berlin, Hamburg and Paris.

4.6.2.2. Exhibitors' evaluation of the exhibition centre

In order to obtain the most objective evaluation of the trade fair event by the exhibitors, the Net Promoter Score (NPS) index was used, which determines the actual level of the respondent's loyalty to the subject of the research. The starting point for the use of this index was a series of studies conducted by one of the world's leading business consultants, Frederick F. Reichheld¹⁸ according to which the most effective method of verifying the degree of customer's satisfaction with a given solution is to ask a customer the question

"To what extent is it likely that you will recommend a given solution to your friend?" (The correspondent selects a digit on a scale of 1-10, where 1 means that the customer will definitely not recommend, and 10 that it will definitely recommend the solution). For the purposes of the study, the sentence was modified and read "To what extent is it likely that you will recommend the trade fair centre where the current event is held to your business partners?".



Graph 2. Net Promoter Score (NPS) in total and for each of the individual trade fair centres. The NPS was calculated according to the methodology proposed by Reichheld F.

Source: Own elaboration based on the study conducted.

18.) F. Reichheld, The one number you need to grow, Harvard Business Review, December 2003, p. 48

According to the presented results of the study, only the most satisfied customers, the so-called “Promoters” (those who indicate 9 or 10 on a scale of 1-10) are likely to be loyal. While customers who will only be satisfied (7-8 points) are not likely to come back to a particular centre and will not recommend it to other companies. In order to obtain a result, it is necessary to calculate the percentage of “Promoters” (respondents indicating 9 or 10) and “Opponents” (respondents indicating 0-6). The NPS value will be obtained by subtracting the “Opponents” from the “Promoters”. The results of the study, i.e. the NET Promoter Score index for the total and particular locations is presented in the Graph no. 2. The highest level of NPS was achieved by the Poznań trade fair centre, while centres in Kielce and Łódź achieved 0%, which means that the number of customers who liked the centre very much is equal to the number of customers who did not like it. In the case of such a result and an industry average of 7%, both centres should find out how they can improve the level of exhibitors’ satisfaction and implement suggestions for their action plans.

Table 4. List of activities that improve exhibitors’ satisfaction with the trade fair centre

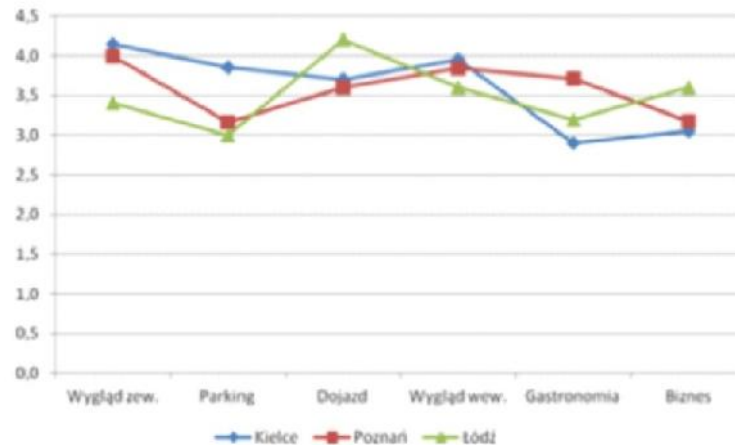
	Kielce	Poznań	Łódź
List of actions - direct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger number of customers interested in the fair • Better advertising of the event • Better financial conditions for regular exhibitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The form of the trade fair is burning out, which means that the increasing number of exhibitors is accidental. • Larger tasting tables (Comment: results from the specific nature of the event) • Better air conditioning • Contact with contractors • Promotion in the media 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even more dissemination of information about the trade fair • Larger number of participating restaurateurs and shops (Comment: results from the specific nature of the event) • Organisation of culinary demonstrations of renowned chefs (Comment: results from the specificity of the event) • More exhibitors
List of activities - indirect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access, • Better location of the 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger area of the fair • More parking spaces

Source: Own elaboration based on the study conducted.

Table 4 shows the exhibitors’ suggestions for each of the individual centres on actions that can be taken in order for the centre to receive a score of 9-10 when calculating the NPS index. The table shows that all the suggestions can be divided into two groups of factors: those which are directly affected by the centre’s management (to be implemented within a relatively short period of time) and those which are indirectly affected by the centre’s management (to be achieved over a longer period of time). The first group of factors may include better advertisement of events, attracting more exhibitors, better financial conditions for regular exhibitors, selection of exhibitors only connected with the subject matter of the event, better equipment and conditions of the fair event, attracting more exhibitors, better financial conditions for regular exhibitors, selection of exhibitors only connected with the subject matter of the event, better equipment and conditions of the fair event (appropriate tables, air-conditioning), more attractions during the trade fair event.

In order to implement the above suggestions the fair centre should analyse current activities in order to improve their performance or to initiate them. Taking these actions do not require a lot of resources but only the formation of appropriate processes. It is worth noting the importance of the ability to create relationships with exhibitors to build their loyalty to the event, which can be achieved, among others, through ensuring better conditions for regular exhibitors. On the other hand, the second group of suggested activities may include those which the management of the trade fair centre is not able to carry out by itself and which require considerable resources. This group includes: better access to the centre, better location of the event, larger trade fair area, more parking spaces. In order to implement these suggestions the management of the centre needs to communicate with its owner (in the case of the presented trade fair centres it is the city or city and the state treasury). In such a case it is good if the development of the trade fair centre is included in the strategy of the city and region development.

Wygląd zew. –
Ext. appearance;
Parking – Parking
; Dojazd – Access;
Wygląd wew. –
Int. appearance;
Gastronomia –
Gastronomy;
Biznes - Business



Graph 3. Evaluation of the various aspects of the centre and the event on a scale of 1 (lowest rating) to 5 (highest rating).

Source: Own elaboration based on the study conducted.

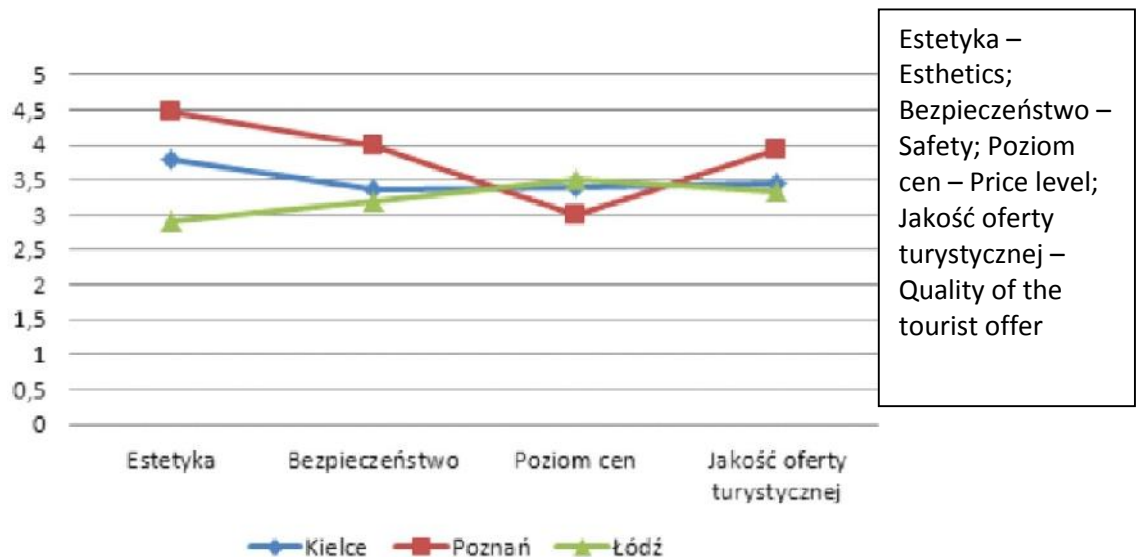
Graph 3 shows how the surveyed exhibitors assessed particular aspects related to the trade fair centre and the event itself. In addition, each of the respondents was asked to indicate the main purpose of their participation in the event. The most frequently mentioned reasons included an increase in sales and related aspects, such as: promotion of the company and new products, establishment of business contacts and knowing the competitors' offer. Therefore, when analysing the process of exhibitor's participation in the fair, special attention should be paid to the category "Possibility of achieving business goals". Here, the first place is occupied by the centre in Łódź, next in Poznań, and finally in Kielce.

The centre in Łódź was also best in the category "Access to the fair centre." The centre in Poznań was rated the worst in this category. In turn, the centre in Kielce was ranked highest in the first two categories "Outdoor appearance of the trade fair centre" and "Availability of parking spaces" as well as in the category "Outdoor appearance of the facility". In these categories the lowest scores were given to the centre in Łódź. In contrast, the centre in Poznań was ranked highest in the category "Catering services at the fair". In this category, the lowest scores were given to the centre in Kielce. Summing up, it should be stated that, despite the fact that the Łódź centre received the highest rating in the category "Possibility of achieving business goals", management of the centre should use their best endeavours to improve its position in other categories as well.

It should be added that the exhibitors assessed only the centre in which the current trade fair event took place and were not asked to compare the centre with any other.

4.6.2.3. Opinion about the city

The study also included an analysis of exhibitors' opinions on the city in which the fair event took place. In the context of the analysis of the possibility for exhibitors to benefit from the offer of spending leisure time after a fair event, an opinion about the city is of great importance. Positive perception of the city by the exhibitors may result in the desire to know its main attractions, while the negative one may certainly discourage the exhibitor from taking advantage of the tourist and recreational offer.



Graph 4. Exhibitors' opinion of the city on the scale 1 (lowest rating)-5 (highest rating).

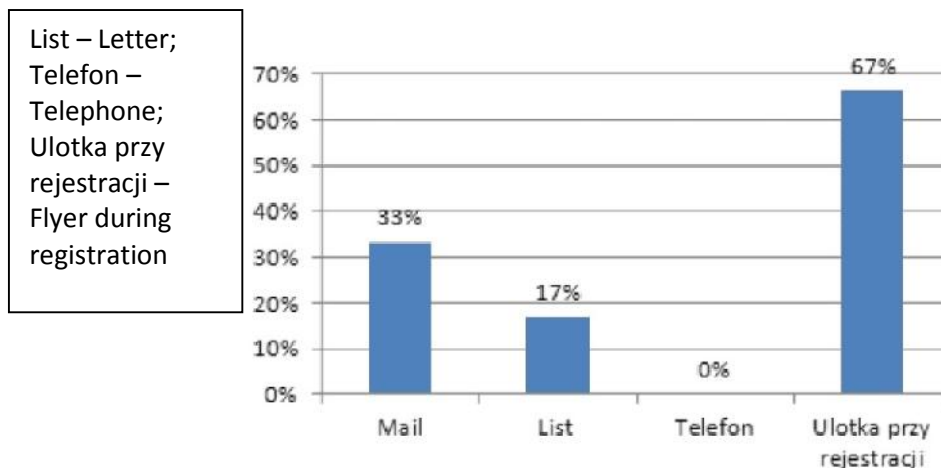
Source: Own elaboration based on the study conducted.

Graph 4 presents the exhibitors' opinion on each of the three cities. According to the presented analysis, Poznań was evaluated best in three out of four categories: "City aesthetics", "Security" and "Quality of tourist offer". The capital city of Wielkopolska was rated worst in the category "Price level", which should not be surprising given the potential of the region and the number of foreign visitors. Kielce is ranked second in all categories, being ahead of Poznań only in the category "Price level". However, the rating of Łódź should worry the management of the local trade fair centre and the city authorities and should be further examined. Łódź was rated the lowest by exhibitors in all categories, except for "Price level". The lowest ratings in the categories "City aesthetics", "Security" and "Quality of tourist offer" mean that the exhibitors will not be willing to participate in additional events, outside the trade fair agenda. The management of the centre and the city authorities should take quick and effective actions to improve the situation. Their absence may cause the exhibitors to choose more attractive cities with a comparable or better offer of trade fair centres. There may be many reasons for such rating, starting from the stereotypical image of Łódź as unattractive city, through the lack of knowledge and information about the attractions of the region, and ending with the actual neglect very visible especially for people visiting the city.

At the same time, there is space to intensify activities among exhibitors promoting tourist and recreational offer as well as gastronomic and cultural offer of Łódź.

4.6.2.4. Information on the offer of spending free time after the fair

Providing the exhibitor with information about the tourist offer and the related offer increases the probability of using it. However, the research showed that only the exhibitors from the centre in Kielce received such information. No one offered it to the exhibitors in Łódź and Poznań.

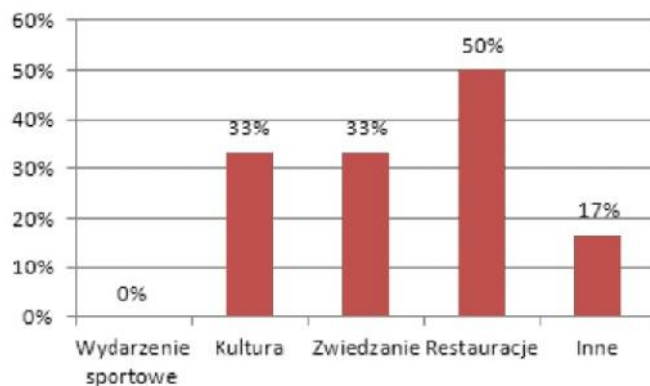


Graph 5. A method of providing exhibitors with information on the offer of spending free time

Source: Own elaboration based on the study conducted.

Due to the low rating of Łódź's attractiveness, the city authorities should consider informing the exhibitors about their additional values.

Graph no. 5 presents ways of providing such information to exhibitors in Kielce. According to the collected data, such information is most often passed on to exhibitors during registration for the trade fair event (67%), via e-mail (33%) and by letter (17%) - during the survey there was an option to mark several forms of providing information. An additional place indicated by the exhibitors was the fair itself. As shown in the graph, some exhibitors received an offer in more than one way. In order to increase the number of exhibitors who participate in tourist, recreational or cultural attractions, each of the fair centres should develop competence in creating and managing individual relations with exhibitors, resulting in making proposals tailored to the individual preferences of each of them. This means that the fair centre should not generalize the information gathered, but should present individual leisure time offer to each of the exhibitors, compiling accessible offers of restaurants, cinemas or theatres for him or her. Of course, the basis for such activities is the ability to collect, analyse and use information efficiently.



Wydarzenie sportowe – sporting event; Kultura – Culture; Zwiedzanie – Sightseeing; Restauracje – Restaurants; Inne - Other

Graph 6. The most common elements of leisure time offer proposed to exhibitors.

Source: Own elaboration based on the study conducted.

Graph no. 6 shows the most common elements of leisure time offer for exhibitors which include an offer to visit specific restaurants, participation in a cultural event and sightseeing of the city. For the "Other" category, respondents themselves suggested visiting pubs, clubs or discos.

In order to verify which element of the leisure time offer is most popular among the exhibitors, they were asked what forms they used most often during their stay at the trade fair. This information is presented in Graph 7. Most - 67% of the exhibitors, who were offered special food conditions in restaurants, used such an offer.

Accordingly 1/3 of exhibitors took part in sightseeing of the city and cultural events. The offers prepared for the exhibitors were distinguished by special discounts for them.

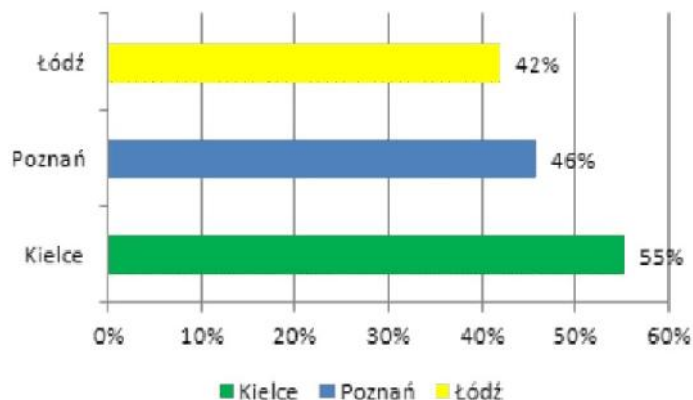


Wydarzenie sportowe – sporting event; Kultura – Culture; Zwiedzanie – Sightseeing; Restauracje – Restaurants; Inne – Other; Uczestnictwo wystawcy – Exhibitor participation

Graph 7. Participation of the exhibitor in the leisure time offer.

Source: Own elaboration based on the study conducted.

Summing up, it should be noted that due to the fact that more than 1/5 of the exhibitors to whom the offer of leisure time have been presented benefited from it, it means that it is necessary and can, on the one hand, contribute to



Graph 8: Importance of the leisure time offer in the overall assessment of the attractiveness of the trade fair event. The values presented are the average of the answers to question 8 of the questionnaire.

Source: Own elaboration based on the study conducted.

the increase of fair event assessment by exhibitors and, on the other hand, to increase revenues by entities forming the offer. A very big role in this process is played by the management of the trade fair centre which should examine the needs of all exhibitors and create an effective opportunity to present the offers interesting for them. The IT solutions existing on the market enable cheap and effective implementation of these activities. The need for such an offer is confirmed by the opinions of the exhibitors themselves. As can be seen from the data presented in Graph 8, exhibitors from all centres highly assess the impact of such offer. The highest scores are given by the exhibitors from Kielce according to which it contributes in 55% to the overall attractiveness of the event. In centres where such offer does not yet exist, exhibitors also highly rated its impact on the overall evaluation of the fair event (46% Poznań, 42% Łódź).

Table 5 shows which leisure time offers the exhibitors would like to receive in particular exhibition centres. According to the information there contained, the leisure time offer can be divided into two categories: expanding the offer of trade fair event and recreational offer. The exhibitors included in the first group the organisation of thematic lectures and trade fair evenings which constitute additional opportunities for gaining knowledge related to the industry and establishing business contacts.

Table 5. Leisure time offer that the exhibitors would like to receive.

Offer	Łódź	Poznań	Kielce
Leisure time activities as part of the trade fair event	◆ Proposed places worth seeing and visiting	◆ Information on catering establishments, special offers in restaurants	◆ A well-organised cultural event and sightseeing of the city
	◆ Cultural events taking place during the fair	◆ Recreation, e.g. pool, gym, spa etc.	◆ More information about pubs and restaurants
	◆ Thematic lectures (the conference part of the fair)	◆ Fair evenings	◆ Culture, museums, entertainment, cinema, theatre
	◆ Recreational and sporting opportunities	◆ Sightseeing of the city ◆ Concerts, cultural events ◆ Information on places worth seeing	◆ Outdoor events

Source: Own elaboration based on the study conducted.

Such an offer will be the most interesting for a group of exhibitors who are interested in obtaining the greatest possible return from the fair event. Such events should be organised by the trade fair centre independently or in cooperation with the trade fair organiser. According to the exhibitors, the second group included typically recreational leisure activities, such as: cultural events, sightseeing of the city, swimming pool, gym, SPA, outdoor events, cultural events, lunches/ dinners in restaurants. In the case of such events, the trade fair centre, as mentioned earlier, should thoroughly know each exhibitor's preferences, and then offer them the best matching offers, which also requires cooperation with relevant companies and institutions. An interesting solution for the exhibitors would surely also be joining the possibility of recreation with an additional possibility to establish business contacts.

An example of this may be the organisation of sightseeing of the city ending with dinner during which the latest trends in the branch are presented and with the possibility of making business contacts.

4.6.3.Presentation of the results of in-depth interviews with managers in the UK

4.6.3.1. Source of competitive advantage in the UK

Respondent no. 1 representing the fair centre in the UK mentioned 4 sources of competitive advantage:

- 1 Brand of the trade fair centre which consists of its perception by former exhibitors and visitors. Their opinions will form an image of the centre as a place worth seeing (or not) organizing interesting events (or not) and customer-friendly (or not). This can be a sustainable source of competitive advantage, but its construction takes a relatively long time.
- 2 Excellent knowledge of the market, consisting of knowledge of customer preferences (exhibitors and visitors) as well as the offer of competitors and the latest market trends. On the basis of this knowledge, the centre is able to effectively position its offer on the market and make good decisions on development. The analysed British centre was well aware that it could not compete with large, luxurious 5-star hotels, while it could successfully compete with 3 and 4-star hotels. In addition, it tried to cooperate with local hotels by directing there organisers looking for smaller areas and cheaper offers, for example.
- 3 Active participation in British and international associations, industry organisations, which increases prestige and credibility of the centre.
- 4 Location - defined as a prestige area with convenient communication with the main exit routes from the city and the airport which can be easily reached by public transport or which allows to park a car near the facility.

Respondent no. 1 emphasized that the positive outcome of successful cooperation with regular customers for many years and the maintenance of high quality service standards despite strong competition is that there are many repetitive contracts each year. Some organisers have been choosing this trade fair and conference centre for almost 20 consecutive years, which can be regarded as a great success, both in financial and image terms. It also involves a large number of recommendations submitted by the persons operating in the organisation of events.

Respondent no. 2 pointed out the following source of competitive advantage:

The subject matter of the event which must be very important and practical for exhibitors and visitors. The exhibitors must be sure that it will be a good investment for them. The centre, often having good relations with local authorities, business and the world of science, should cooperate with the organiser to ensure that the event meets the above criteria.

In addition, the trade fair managers should have a very broad knowledge of the most important and latest trends in industries that are crucial to them. When such knowledge is well used it can be a lasting source of competitive advantage.

4.6.3.2. Customer satisfaction survey

Respondent no. 1 provides two types of surveys which are used to learn customers' opinions and their level of satisfaction. The first one is distributed to each customer, the second one, more extensive, is sent to two randomly selected customers once a month. The centre responds to all the problems that are suggested by the customers, but the respondent admits that the problem with obtaining information is the low return rate of completed surveys. In addition to measuring customer satisfaction, the respondent presents a system for verifying whether or not the procedures are followed by the centre which is measured by annual internal quality control and ad hoc audits as well as external audits aimed at maintaining or obtaining national and branch accreditations confirming the quality of customer service. Respondent no. 2 sends an internet survey to each customer asking about the quality of an event and the individual conference speakers. The result is that the company invites to cooperation only those speakers who received the highest rates from the participants of the event. Another channel for checking customers' feedback is Twitter through which the company receives messages during an event and at the same time can make adjustments to the current situation if the problem can be solved at a given moment. In addition, respondent no. 2 stressed the importance of having a customer information base, especially for the key ones. It is important to learn the arguments that are important for organisers when choosing a place to organise an event. With this knowledge, a fair and conference centre can prepare an appropriate offer and put the emphasis on its unique benefit, which will answer the needs of the organiser in the context of event type. For this purpose, the surveyed trade fair centre is involved in networking activities and treats individually each present and potential customer and its needs. Managers know that the decision making process on the business market (B2B) is long and requires well-established relationships.

4.6.3.3. Offer for exhibitors in terms of leisure time

The respondent representing centre no. 1 cooperates with local hotels - visitors and exhibitors can obtain a 25% discount by providing proof of participation in the trade fair event. As hotels are tax payers in the local district from which the centre receives funds for operation, the respondent admits that it is in the centre's interest to encourage guests to use the local hotels. According to the respondent, all the attractions offered to the exhibitors are dependent on the nature of the event and are the responsibility of the organiser. Depending on the needs, the organiser provides hotel reservations for VIPs, transport from the airport and a tourist program for families who come from abroad together with an exhibitor or important guest and provides a translator if they do not know English. In turn respondent no. 2 admitted that in response to the needs of the participants of the events, it will prepare a programme of spending free time in the next year, especially for people from outside the city. However, the support will mainly consist in recommending hotels and restaurants or ordering taxis for foreign guests or informing about changes in public transport routes.

All other attractions will be adapted to the individual needs of important customers. In the respondent's opinion, such an offer may increase the overall assessment of customer service, but it will not be decisive for the choice of the event. When talking about the leisure time offer respondent no. 2 said that nowadays the promotion of the event is mainly carried out via the Internet as well as social media and articles in the press published before the event or reports after the finished event.

4.7. Conclusions of the study

4.7.1. Conclusions of individual in-depth interviews with managers in Poland

4.7.1.1. Sources of competitive advantage in Poland

To sum up, the most frequently mentioned factor of competitive advantage was infrastructure. However, its definitions differed depending on its current state. For the respondent managing the company with the least developed trade fair space, the sufficient infrastructure was a large hall for large trade fair events (on the Polish scale) without the need to use tents. In turn, larger centres defined infrastructure as a necessity to gather all the resources needed to organise the fair at the fair venue. This means that these centres are not worried about fair space, but about providing exhibitors with the necessary services to effectively present their offer, e.g. translation agency, restaurant room, large parking lot for customers, etc. It is also important that the leading centres, as well as smaller ones, modernize and build new fair areas. Thus, this factor cannot be regarded as a source of competitive advantage, but as a fundamental element in order to be able to function in the industry at all. Based on the answers given by the respondents, the sources of competitive advantage may be divided into hard factors (physical") and soft factors which

are not directly visible and are less tangible, but give visible results. Among the former ones, the location of the fair centre and the price level of the fair area were included. Among the second group there is a brand of the centre, perfect market knowledge, outstanding trade fair theme which corresponds with customers' preferences, effective organisational culture, support of the owner (city) in the creation of fair and fair-related infrastructure as well as a friendly climate for investors associated with fairs, satisfaction of the visitors, a proposal of value for the visitor and the thematic purity of the trade fair event. In the context of the continuous improvement of the quality and quantity of trade fair space in most centres and effective management concepts implemented in other sectors it may be assumed that the main sources of competitive advantage in the fair sector will be the ability to properly understand the needs of exhibitors and visitors (as those which determine the success of the trade fair event) and creating an effective value proposition for them.

An essential element in the development and implementation of these two factors will be the effective management of human resources (creation of an appropriate team of professionals) and an appropriate organisational culture, customer-oriented and inspiring employees.

4.7.1.2. The biggest current challenges for the trade fair centres and organisers

Each of the respondents considers the Internet as a threat to the trade fair, admitting at the same time that it is not able to substitute face-to-face meetings with contractors. On the basis of the interviews conducted, it can be concluded that the trade fair centres did not lose customers or revenues as a result of the popularization of establishing and maintaining business contacts only via the Internet. Maybe exhibitors recognized the trade fair as a complementary channel of communication to the Internet channel. The smallest centre goes a step further by planning to connect online reality with real life in the form of virtual fairs held during a real event.

In the opinion of the respondent from the dynamically developing centre there is a need to introduce national standards for trade fair events in order for the customers, especially foreign ones, to have a quality guarantee and for the name "trade fair" to be able to meet the metaphorically understood "brand promise". The respondent from the smallest centre in this context drew attention to the infrastructure in which no trade fair event should be organised if the facility is not suitable for this purpose.

For a leading centre, the challenge is also to know the customer's needs and adapt the offer accordingly. Respondents from the developed centres do not mention, however, the infrastructure whose main role is emphasized by the respondent from the smallest centre.

4.7.1.3. Customer satisfaction survey

Referring to the sources of competitive advantage specified in the conclusions identified by respondents, one of the most important was the focus on meeting customer needs. Customer satisfaction survey may testify to the implementation of this concept in the organisation's operations. According to what the management guru Peter Drucker said, "If you can't measure it, you can't manage it". In the analysed statements of fair centres' managers, different levels of competence can be seen in the satisfaction survey. At the most advanced level, the aim of the survey is to maximize the adaptation of the offer so that it meets the customer's expectations, while at the lowest level the manager recognizes the essence of the satisfaction survey, but the centre is not able to take effective actions aimed at obtaining information from customers. An interesting solution may be to involve the local university which could provide appropriate research and fill this gap. Two of the three surveyed centres in Poland noticed the need to protect the "fair" mark, namely to reserve it for some events of adequate quality, thus as a postulate to introduce a certain certification system or a specific standard in Poland, or a common accreditation system, which gives the customers, especially foreign ones, a guarantee of a certain quality of the fair event.

4.7.1.4. The offer of leisure activities for exhibitors

All respondents from centres in Poland organise banquets for exhibitors, whereas the respondent from the leading centre emphasizes the role of adapting the event to the needs of exhibitors and prior examination of these needs. Two larger centres cooperate with institutions and companies in terms of organizing leisure time for exhibitors and in a smaller urban centre respondent emphasizes that companies see a great potential in the number of potential customers increased during the trade fair event.

The smallest centre sees its advantage in higher affordability of hotels, but does not see the potential in offering tourist, or rather recreational and entertainment attractions to exhibitors.

4.7.1.5. Cooperation with the city

Summing up this part, there is a very noticeable difference in cooperation and approach to it between the trade fair centres (in all three cases the city is the owner of the trade fair centre) and the Town Halls. Where it works best, a representative of the centre was able to precisely define its areas, objectives and expected results. On the other hand, where cooperation is considered to be an existing fact or is not as close as it could possibly be, the respondents were not able to define what exactly they were expecting and what they could offer. Each trade fair centre has the potential of exhibiting companies and visitors at trade fair events, but the trick is to capitalize and turn it into benefit for local companies and the image of the city and the region.

4.7.2. Conclusions from the questionnaire survey of exhibitors in Poland

4.7.2.1. Exhibitors' evaluation of the trade fair centre

The use of the Net Promoter Score (NPS) index for the evaluation of the trade fair centre allows to determine the actual loyalty level of the respondents (in this case the exhibitors). The centre in Poznań was awarded the best score in this assessment, which means that its customers were the most satisfied with the whole event. On the other hand, the other two centres received zero NPS score, which means that the number of most satisfied customers is equal to the number of least satisfied customers. Such a result may be a warning signal for these centres which require them to act quickly, however, due to the study limitations it would be important to verify this aspect on a representative sample.

The changes suggested by the exhibitors may be divided into two groups of factors: those which are directly affected by the management of the centre (to be implemented within a relatively short period of time) and those which are indirectly affected by the centre (to be achieved over a longer period of time). The first group of factors may include better advertisement of events, attracting more exhibitors, better financial conditions for regular exhibitors, selection of exhibitors only connected with the subject matter of the event, better equipment and conditions of the fair event (appropriate tables, air-conditioning), more attractions during the trade fair event. In order to implement the above suggestions the fair centre should analyse current activities in order to improve their performance or to initiate new ones. Taking these actions do not require a lot of resources but only the formation of appropriate processes. It is worth noting the importance of the ability to create relationships with exhibitors to build their loyalty to the event which can be achieved, e.g. through ensuring better conditions for regular exhibitors. On the other hand, the second group of suggested activities may include those which the management of the trade fair centre is not able to carry out by itself and which require considerable resources. This group includes: better access to the centre, better location of the event, larger trade fair area, more parking spaces. In order to implement these suggestions the management of the centre needs to communicate with its owner (in the case of the presented trade fair centres it is the city or city and the state treasury).

In such a case it is good if the development of the trade fair centre is included in the strategy of the city and region development.

When analyzing the process of participation in the fair by the exhibitor it must be noted that despite the fact of receiving the highest rate by the centre in Łódź in the category "Possibility of achieving business goals", the people managing the centre should use their best endeavours to improve its position in other categories as well. With strong competition in this market exhibitors from year to year will be more demanding in terms of other elements of the process of participation in the event, which may result in their resignation from the centre.

4.7.2.2. Opinion about the city

Giving the lowest score to Łódź in the assessment of the city (except for the price level) should worry both the city authorities and the authorities of the trade fair centre. Both institutions should take quick and effective actions to improve the situation. Their absence may cause the exhibitors to choose more attractive cities with a comparable or better offer of trade fair centres. There may be many reasons for such rating, starting from the stereotypical image of Łódź as unattractive city, through the lack of knowledge and information about the attractions of the region, and ending with the actual neglect very visible especially for people visiting the city. At the same time, there is space to intensify activities among exhibitors promoting tourist and recreational offer as well as gastronomic and cultural offer of Łódź.

4.7.2.3. Information on the offer of spending free time after the fair day

In order to increase the number of exhibitors who participate in tourist, recreational or cultural attractions, each of the fair centres should develop competence in creating and managing individual relations with exhibitors, resulting in making proposals tailored to the individual preferences of each of them. This means that the fair centre should not generalize the information gathered, but should present individual leisure time offer to each of the exhibitors, compiling accessible offers of restaurants, cinemas or theatres for him or her. Of course, the basis for such activities is the ability to collect, analyse and use information efficiently. It should be noted that the fact that more than 1/5 of the exhibitors to whom the leisure time offer has been presented have benefited from it means that such an offer is necessary and may cause, on the one hand, an increase in the evaluation of fair events by the exhibitors and, on the other hand, an increase in revenues by the entities creating the offer. A very big role in this process is played by the management of the trade fair centre which should examine the needs of all exhibitors and create an effective opportunity to present the offers interesting for them. The IT solutions existing on the market enable cheap and effective implementation of these activities.

The respondents' preferences regarding the elements of the leisure time offer were divided into two groups: expanding the offer of the trade fair and recreational offer. The first type (organisation of thematic lectures, fair evenings) will be the most interesting for the group of exhibitors who are interested in obtaining the greatest possible return from the fair event.

Organisation of this type of events should be provided by a fair centre (where it is the organiser) or a fair centre in cooperation with the trade fair organiser. The second group (cultural events, sightseeing of the city, swimming pool, gym, SPA, outdoor events, cultural events, lunches/dinners in restaurants) should be created by the trade fair centre together with institutions providing the above-mentioned forms of spending leisure time. Of course the offer, based on the information acquired by the centre, should be adapted to the requirements of each customer. An interesting solution for the exhibitors would surely also be joining the possibility of recreation with an additional possibility to establish business contacts. An example of this may be the organisation of sightseeing of the city ending with dinner during which the latest trends in the branch are presented and with the possibility of making business contacts.

4.7.3. The conclusions of in-depth interviews with managers from the UK

4.7.3.1. Sources of competitive advantage in the UK

According to respondents from the UK, the main sources of competitive advantage are: the centre brand among exhibitors and visitors, perfect market knowledge resulting in the creation of a unique offer (for exhibitors and visitors) of, e.g. trade fair theme and membership in British and international industry associations and organisations.

4.7.3.2. Customer satisfaction survey

Each of the analysed trade fair centres in the UK regularly conducted customer satisfaction surveys using various research tools (e.g. paper and online surveys) and indexes (e.g. Net Promoter Score). Taking into account the level of competence in terms of customer satisfaction research in the UK centres it is important to note the knowledge of the most recent management trends in the sense that satisfaction does not always lead to loyalty, but only its highest level leads to loyalty, which is measured by the Net Promoter Score index. Moreover, in the UK market there are industry standards and the centres verify the quality of the services offered not only by asking the customer directly but also by improving their internal procedures to meet the requirements of the audit institutions and, as a result, obtain industry-recognised accreditation. For the customer, this automatically means a higher level of service quality.

4.7.3.3. Offer of leisure time activities for exhibitors

In the UK, the managers of most trade fair centres put great emphasis on matching the offer to the needs and preferences of each customer, but do not consider this to be a key factor in the choice of event. Adjusting the offer to the customer's needs is possible thanks to the implemented market information system. Moreover, the trade fair centres cooperate with local hotels, which is of benefit to all interested parties: special conditions for customers, the sale of hotel reservations, good image of a fair centre.

4.8. Recommendations

No.	Conclusion	Recommendation	Addressee of the recommendation
Strategic recommendations on the regional level			
1.	<p>Insufficient level of cooperation between the trade fair centre and authorities of the city (City Hall) means missed opportunity for creating the synergy effect between these entities.</p> <p>(The fairs contribute to the city's development and are a generator of various services in the city. On the other hand, the city/region authorities may help in the development of the fair-related infrastructure and give their consent to the activities of various companies associated with fairs).</p>	<p>WHAT?</p> <p>Strengthening cooperation between the trade fair centre and the city.</p> <p>HOW?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Developing a detailed document containing specific actions and their expected effects which partners expect from each other, especially in connection with the challenge of making the best possible use of the new infrastructure in 2012. - Inclusion of trade fair centre development in the long-term strategy of the city and region development. - Implementation of actions aimed at improving the elements determining the attractiveness of the city, in particular appearance and safety (identified in the survey as an important element in the overall assessment of the fair event by the exhibitors as well as their readiness to take advantage of the offer in terms of spending their free time during the fair event). 	Town Hall, Promotion, Tourism and International Relations Office.

Operational recommendations at the level of business entities

Comment: Since the study focuses on the trade fair industry, which is a part of business tourism, the recommendations have been proposed mainly for business tourism entities, i.e. trade fair centres and organisers of trade fair or fair and conference events. In some cases, the company managing the fair facility is also the organiser of the event, while in others it rents exhibition space. Recommendations were also presented for tourism industry companies and other providers from the region as well as local universities.

2.	<p>Insufficiently used opportunity to participate in trade associations.</p> <p>(Active participation in Polish and international associations and industry organisations allows to obtain the most important and up-to-date information about the industry.</p>	<p>WHAT?</p> <p>Active participation in Polish and international associations, trade organisations.</p> <p>HOW?</p> <p>Entering international organisations (e.g. UFI- The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry) and using this participation to win customers and build a brand of the centre/organiser.</p> <p>Using the fact of participation in Polish organisations (e.g. Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry) to actively attract organisers/exhibitors.</p>	Trade fair centre, organiser of the fair.
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Moreover, taking into account the fact of belonging to recognized branch organisations, especially those international organisations in marketing communication, allows for an outstanding position of the trade fair centre and influences its positive perception by customers, and as a result it is a factor that builds a strong brand).

3. Insufficient customer orientation (exhibitor and visitor).

(The diagnosed challenges of the studied part of the business tourism industry and a sustainable sources of competitive advantage determine the success of the organisation through its full orientation towards the customer. Lack of such orientation or realizing it in a fragmented and inconsistent way will result in missed market opportunities and low skills of establishing and maintaining effective long-term relationships with customers).

WHAT?

Creating a team of customer-oriented employees across the company, regardless of the organisational unit in which they work.

HOW?

- Introduction to the existing team employees who are able to implement customer-oriented organisational culture and have competence in establishing and maintaining customer relations.
- Implementation of procedures which ensure the quality of exhibitor and visitor service required on the market and consistent monitoring of their implementation.
- Training the current team in implementing new procedures.

Trade fair centre, organiser of the fair.

4.

WHAT?

Implementing an organisational culture that contributes to the organisation's customer orientation.

Trade fair centre, organiser of the fair.

Insufficient implementation of an organisational culture that contributes to the organisation's customer orientation results in underutilisation of employees' potential, market opportunities and, as a consequence, failure to succeed in long period of time.

5. The need to create a strong brand recognized among organisers, exhibitors and visitors as a synonym of quality in the trade fair industry.

(The strong brand of the fair centre may constitute its permanent source of competitive advantage. However, its development takes time and consistency. It is primarily the opinions of current and former customers (organisers, exhibitors and visitors) that determine the brand of the fair centre. It is mainly their opinions that will shape the image of a centre as a place that is worth seeing (or not), which holds interesting events (or not) and which is customer-friendly (or not) as well as which offers added value in the form of an additional offer of leisure time activities after the fair).

6. Insufficient market information system on the basis of which fair management could take effective business decisions.

HOW?

- Adaptation of the mission, values and all processes in the trade fair centre to understand the needs of the customer and provide it with a valuable offer tailored to its needs.

WHAT?

Effective and conscious management of the trade centre's brand from the perspective of long-term development of the centre.

HOW?

- Consistent attention to ensuring compliance with procedures in terms of quality of service for exhibitors and visitors (standards confirmed by audits).
- Organization of events of desired subject matter or inviting to cooperation such organisers who will provide events not by chance, but in accordance with the thematic profile chosen by the centre (after an analysis of current trends in the theme of trade fairs).
- Attempt to bring back successful fair events that have been withdrawn from the Łódź because of insufficient infrastructure (BoatShow - sailing fairs, CEDE - dental fairs).

Trade fair centre,
organiser of the fair.

WHAT?

The introduction of a market information system to support making business decisions.

Trade fair centre,
organiser of the fair.

The management of the centre must have knowledge of the market which consists of information on:

- customer preferences (exhibitors and visitors)
- the current offer of competitors
- current market trends.

On the basis of this knowledge, the centre is able to effectively position its offer on the market, establish pricing policy and make good decisions on development.

7. **Low use of the opportunity offered by possible cooperation between the trade fair centre and local universities.** (Establishing cooperation with local academic and business institutions may enable the fair centre to acquire the missing competences or tools and be a source of

HOW?

Developing the process of obtaining market information, distributing it in the organisation, processing this information and making decisions based on it. It is important to be systematic in the above activities.

Examples of sources of information necessary to make effective business decisions in the following areas:

- a) Current market trends - branch organisations, available reports.
 - b) Strategies and actions of competitors - websites, published industry documents.
 - c) Customers - a regular research of exhibitors' and visitors' needs (through e.g. online questionnaire filled out when registering for an event) and survey of satisfaction of both customer groups (through e.g. online questionnaire to fill in after the trade fair event sent together with thanks for participation in the event), direct interviews with external companies organising trade fair events in Łódź. In order to obtain the most objective evaluation of the trade fair event by the exhibitors, it is worth to use the Net Promoter Score (NPS) index which determines the actual level of the respondent's loyalty to the subject of the research.
- Creating a system of on-line registration which will allow for the collection and processing of customer data.
 - Identifying and measuring the key factors of the centre's success.

WHAT?

Establishing cooperation with local scientific institutions.

HOW?

In order to acquire the missing competences or tools, commissioning the development of certain processes to universities (e. g. carrying out an image survey among exhibitors and visitors or customer satisfaction survey). Customer satisfaction survey carried out by an external company additionally allows for an objective evaluation of the centre.

Trade fair centre,
organiser of the fair.

financial benefits for the university as an effective form of cooperation between science and business).

WHAT?

Development of an offer of detailed application studies which the university can offer to the trade fair centre/trade fair organiser.

HOW?

Agreeing with the trade fair centre/organiser an area which is particularly interesting and which cannot be realized without the support of science.

For example:
University
Łódź, Faculty of
Management,
Technical
University
Łódź, Faculty of
Organization
and
Management,
Higher School
of Tourism
and Hotel
Management
in Łódź.

Low rate of utilization of opportunities flowing from appropriate management of customer relations.

Since one of the greatest challenges facing trade fair centres is to provide high quality exhibitors (the largest, fastest growing, the most innovative companies) and visitors (potential business partners, branch journalists), the ability to create and manage relations with them determines the success of the trade fair event and, consequently, the success of the trade fair centre. The ability to create a "Learning to learn" relation, meaning the ability to collect information.

Implementation of effective establishment and management of customer relations.

HOW?

- Adjusting the communication channel to the customer's preferences, including the use of social media (eg. Facebook and Twitter) in the organisation of the fair event, especially for individual customers (B2C).

The choice of communication channels with the customer shall be followed after receiving information from the customer about the preferred method. It should be noted that the Internet enables precise communication with the customer and easy storage and processing of information obtained from him/her. Effective promotion of the trade fair event can be carried out via the Internet, social media and press articles before the event as well as reports after the finished event.

- Planned creation of exceptional experience for the customer (exhibitors and visitors).

Since business decisions are also influenced to a large extent by emotions, the trade fair centre should acquire the ability to create unique and coherent experience for the customer during the whole process of participation in the event.

organiser of the fair.

about the preferences of the customer and on their basis preparing the best offer for the customer (the ability to create such a relation can become a source of sustainable competitive advantage because the more the customer engages, the greater is its contribution to the relation. Therefore, it is more convenient for the customer to be loyal than to teach another company about its requirements.

9. Low utilization of the offer of leisure time activities as a factor that can increase the attractiveness of the trade fair event

and trade fair centre.
(The surveyed exhibitors considered that the leisure time offer increased their ratings for the attractiveness of the trade fair event).

(not forgetting to strengthen positive associations after the end of the event).

The customer's experience consists of many elements: a registration questionnaire, customer service over the telephone and Internet, the appearance of the city, the subject of trade fair events, the infrastructure of the trade fair, the price offer, organisational aspects, tourist, recreational and cultural offer of the city for the exhibitor. It is the overall assessment of participation in the event that influences the customer's decision of future participation. At the same time, the trade fair centre and the organiser of the event (if these are different organisations) should concentrate on the best possible realization of the most important goals for exhibitors and visitors. The most frequently mentioned reasons by the exhibitors included an increase in sales and related aspects, such as: promotion of the company and new products, establishment of business contacts and knowing the competitors' offer.

- Creation of a participation offer tailored to the preferences of each exhibitor.

The offer adjusted to the customer's requirements (both relevant elements and appropriate channels of communication), i.e. the sum of all the benefits that it will receive contributes significantly to strengthening the relation with him or her. Cytat jednego z menedżerów zarządzających ośrodkiem targowym *"If the trade fair is well-profiled, if there is a specific offer directed to a particular recipient and that the visitor knows that when arriving here he or she will have certain benefits, it must be successful"*.

WHAT?

Creation of a leisure time offer adjusted to customer preferences together with local institutions and companies.

HOW?

In connection with the fact that customers may differ significantly depending on the branch of the trade fair (and even within it) each of the customers should be offered an offer tailored to their preferences. This information can be obtained when appropriately developing the registration questionnaire or on the basis of data from previous years.

Trade fair centre,
organiser of the fair.

The offer of leisure time activities can be divided into 2 categories: expanding the offer of trade fair event as well as tourism and recreational offer. The first group (organisation of thematic lectures and fair evenings) will be the most interesting for this part of exhibitors and visitors who are willing to get the greatest possible return from the trade fair event. Organisation of this type of events should be provided by a fair centre (where it is the organiser) or a fair centre in cooperation with the trade fair organiser. The second group is a recreational and tourist offer for customers who want to relax after a whole day of work. Such an offer should be created with local tourism companies, cultural and sporting institutions and catering companies. The offer should include, e.g. cultural events, sightseeing of the city, swimming pool, SPA, outdoor events, cultural events, meals in restaurants. Both the first and the second offer should be tailored to the preferences of each customer. Customers are impressed with special discounts for trade fair participants. An interesting solution for exhibitors would also certainly be to combine recreation opportunities with additional possibility of establishing commercial contacts. An example of this may be the organisation of sightseeing of the city ending with dinner during which the latest trends in the branch are presented and with the possibility of making business contacts.

- Introduction of VIP offer for the most important customers (lack of the fair management's distinction of the best and most prospective customers or lack of special offers for them may result in resignation from participation in the event for the benefit of the competition).
- Depending on the needs, the organiser provides hotel reservations, transport from the airport and a tourist program for families who come from abroad together with an exhibitor or important guest and provides a translator if they do not know English.
- Creation of a constantly updated section on the centre's and fair organiser's website devoted to the city and the region (presenting tourist events and attractions in an interesting way), creation of

the “Guide for the fair exhibitor/guest” adapted for short stays in the city and region.

WHAT?

Creation of a special offer for exhibitors and trade fair guests as part of their free time spent in the city and region during the trade fair event.

HOW?

As exhibitors expect an offer of leisure time to be presented and are likely to benefit from it, regional service providers who can meet these needs, and thus increase their revenues during trade fair events, should prepare a special offer for the participants of the trade fair. This offer should include promotions or discounts for participants of the event. Details as to the identified customer needs are presented in the report (Subchapter: Conclusions from the questionnaire survey of exhibitors in Poland).

Companies from the tourism, recreation, catering, hotel industry.

WHAT?

Active promotion of integrated tourist offer of the region among trade fair exhibitors and visitors.

HOW?

Preparation of a special e-Guide for exhibitors and visitors which the centre/organiser can send to each participant of the trade fair during registration.

Regional Tourist Organisation.

10. **Too low level of the exhibitors’ satisfaction with the trade fair event.**

The success of the event is currently determined by the satisfaction of exhibitors and visitors. Therefore, the quality of participation for both of these groups must be as high as possible.

WHAT?

Ensuring high quality trade fair event for exhibitors and visitors.

HOW?

- The necessity to know the exhibitors’ needs in order to enable them to fulfill the main goal that made them to come to the fair.

(Among the most frequently mentioned exhibitors’ motives were increased sales and related aspects, such as: promotion of the company and new products, establishing business contacts and knowing the competitors’ offer). Ensuring

Trade fair centre, organiser of the fair.

Ensuring high-quality fair space is a basic condition for important trade fair events to take place in the centre. This means that the infrastructure was no longer an advantage for the exhibitors, but it was important to provide them with the necessary services to present their offer effectively, e.g. Translation agency, dining room, large parking lot for customers, etc.

- The subject matter of the event must be very important and practical for exhibitors as well as visitors. The exhibitors must be sure that it will be a good investment for them. The centre, often having good relations with local authorities, business and the world of science, should cooperate with the organiser to ensure that the event meets the above criteria. In addition, the trade fair managers should have a very broad knowledge of the most important and latest trends in industries that are crucial to them. The organiser should ensure “thematic purity of the fair event”, i.e. accurate selection of exhibitors so that the event does not consist of random participants.

- Combination of the fair and conference part - the needs have been identified in terms of providing a thematic expert part of the event where the quality of speakers will prevail.

The conference part is preceded by networking activities. In order to select those speakers who have experience in giving presentations, one should review their previous presentations and invite them to cooperate at least six months before the event. The selection of the date of the event is important, it should be considered whether it is not within the holiday period or near the long weekend. Only with confirmation from the main speakers a full agenda for the event can be built.

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