

Scan takes notes at Euroshop 2005

In February 2005, leading exhibition and display company, Scan Display Solutions, took seven staff members to Euroshop 2005, the world's leading global retail trade show. The Scan group attended the show in Düsseldorf, Germany as part of the Exhibition Association of Southern Africa's 28-member delegation.

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From 19 to 23 February 2005, the tour group walked the 14 halls, comprising 200 000m², to see the 1 500 exhibitors' latest offerings for retail, exhibitions and displays. Euroshop is held every three years and the 2005 show had 95 000 visitors from 40 countries.

Justin Hawes, MD of Scan Display Solutions, and the EXSA tour leader, says that the visit to Euroshop provided an excellent opportunity for the Scan team to see what is happening in the international arena and to bring back fresh ideas and cutting-edge innovations for the local market.

Justin says that this year's show was mind-blowing: "The overriding impression was of professionalism. The outstanding quality of the exhibition and the displays was a strong indication of the importance of the exhibition medium in the European business arena."

This year's main stand-building lesson was based on the age-old axiom of 'less is more'. The stands were impressive in their simplicity, without clutter and excess messages.

Many of the stands used experiential marketing, encouraging visitors' participation on the stand. One example was the stand with a spectacular 250 year old olive tree as its centrepiece. Visitors could alter the lighting on the stand from dawn to midday, then to dusk and a thunderstorm, demonstrating the impact of mood lighting on the olive tree.

Alan de Beer, Chief Designer at Scan, says that what impressed him most was the variety of materials used including paper, nylon and plastic. He was also inspired by the use of height and innovative lighting to make a statement.

Internationally, exhibitions are regarded as an important component of the marketing mix. Marketers put creative energy into exhibiting, allocating a big portion of their budgets to shows. A spot survey revealed that some of the Euroshop exhibitors had started their planning almost a year in advance.

The exhibitors also staff their stands with well trained personnel. More often than not, the exhibiting companies' MD's are on the stand themselves, again reinforcing their commitment to shows.

Scan was also impressed by the support that the city of Düsseldorf gives to Euroshop. Public transport is free for Euroshop ticket holders and there is Euroshop branding everywhere. Even in downtown Düsseldorf the windows of Gucci and Prada make reference to Euroshop with banners and posters. The Scan team felt that South African host cities could follow this example to cash in on the commercial power of exhibitions.

The Scan delegation has returned from Euroshop with fresh ideas, inspired and eager to apply what they saw.

Justin Hawes says: "The investment that we made in taking a Scan delegation to Euroshop has already paid off. The experience has fired-up the team and empowered them to continue to create the award-winning stands and displays that have made Scan a market leader."

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