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Connecting Worldwide Exhibit Supplier Associations in North America

In 1990 three past presidents of IFES pushed to get the American association EDPA in the international trade show marketplace. Koen Bogaert, Leslie Zech, and Holgar Nicolaysen of IFES encouraged Ingrid Boyd of EDPA to join IFES. EDPA presidents, Dalton Jenkins and Larry Kulchawik then carried the torch afterwards. At the time, EDPA membership to IFES was not fully supported by its members. Other EDPA presidents and EDPA International Chapter members then followed to pave the way to help American exhibit suppliers to better compete internationally through IFES and the EDPA International Chapter.

The IFES membership dues became a major issue for EDPA, since not all EDPA members participated internationally. The dues fee became a value vs return issue for EDPA's general membership. So ten years later IFES changed their by-laws to allow individual exhibit companies to be direct members of IFES, as well as the country associations they represented. Dues were then paid directly, and not through the association. This was a controversial move at the time, but in the end was the right move. This change opened the door wider for networking between countries and also opened the door for other country suppliers to be IFES members, since some countries did not have an active exhibit industry association. During this period, the two strongest exhibit marketing countries, Germany and USA, launched international chapters within their own associations. Both EDPA and FAMAB fully realized the international need of their members to find trusted partners, so they each created an international chapter to provide an added focus, knowledge, and networking for their exhibit supplier members doing international work. This was also an added source of revenue for their associations. There were times when both FAMAB and EDPA felt they did not need IFES or OSPI, since their mutual strength and influence in the expo business was so strong. In the end, these two powerful associations elected not to be myopic in they're thinking and realized the power of being a citizen of the world, rather than rule it with a few. Think big, act small.

The exhibit supplier members of both EDPA and FAMAB associations are entrepreneurial in spirit and are made up of some of the most powerful and generous exhibit companies in the world. They all believe in the power of trade shows. For their support and generosity, their members want value in their

membership. The big exhibit companies also realized that they need to think big, but act small to be trusted among their colleges in their region.

Of all the country associations that have "international chapters," only EDPA has strong membership from exhibit suppliers outside the USA. The international members who join EDPA are looking for one thing — added business and trusted partners from a strong American marketplace. They are looking to expand and support their customers outside of their own country region. American exhibit companies are also looking for trusted international partners to support their total efforts abroad. This two way exchange will eventually develop to create exclusive partnerships for the suppliers who manage multiple international events. I'm not sure how long this balloon will expand, but for now is still growing. IFES, EDPA, and FAMAB play a strong role to provide a platform for fairness and cooperation between countries. As the world of trade show marketing evolves, so do the world locations selected to conduct a tradefairs. A united IFES, EDPA, and FAMAB stand in the belief that all countries collectively offer a unique opportunity to the end user/ exhibitors when trade show venue locations continue to shift from country to country. Local knowledge and resources will surely be needed. Where will world trade shows move their sites to next? Are you ready to succeed?

This years annual EDPA meeting, ACCESS2016 will be held Nov 30- Dec 2 at Orlando's Hyatt Grand Cyprus. The International track will focus on and feature trade show success in Germany.

Euroshop will also be held again in Dusseldorf, Germany in 2017. Hope to see you at both of these events!