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On the cover:

Mammoet's PTCIII - Amalia - removing a 654 tonne reactor head at Petrobras refinery in Brazil. This lift was followed by the installation of a new head weighing 522 tonnes. Space limitations required the PTC boom to be erected in the air.



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c&a comment



It's show time

The next two months see a number of construction industry fairs and exhibitions taking place. Some of them are annual events while others, such as Bauma, are held less frequently. With the advent of the internet and

modern communications, not to mention the negative view to air travel by some people, is the international trade fair an obsolete throwback to the days of the medieval horse and guild fairs whose time has now passed?

In terms of truly international construction exhibitions there has been a slow movement towards a single show with just Intermat, Conexpo and Bauma left in the arena, one of which is likely to be supplanted by an Asian show such as Bauma China.

One thing is certain, Bauma will reign supreme and will continue to consolidate its position as 'the' international show. This is in spite of the fact that some 75 to 80 percent of all Bauma's visitors are from Germany and the surrounding German-speaking region. The big show dwarfs every other show in terms of size and numbers and it is the event that companies focus on for the introduction of new ideas, products and concepts.

Crane manufacturers in particular have been questioning the need and cost of a 'big' show every year, given that only a small percentage of the visitors are likely to be buyers of their products and they already know most, if not all of them. They would love to pull out of some of the shows, but few are brave enough to do it unilaterally and show organisers know that 'divide and conquer' almost always works. The thought is that the money would be better spent inviting everyone to an open day where everyone is potential buyer and you have their undivided attention.

What this overlooks of course is that at an exhibition, buyers can wander from manufacturer to manufacturer, meet senior managers of each, compare gossip and views and even do a few deals in a single day or two. Visitors will also meet a broader cross section of people and are likely to pick up new ideas from some of the ancillary exhibitors.

An exhibition is also a real event - a day out. A good show has a buzz to it - a level of unpredictability to what one might see or learn. Yes, there are perhaps too many, and the cost of some is out of kilter with the benefits, but in spite of its medieval origins the exhibition is here to stay.

By the way, if you are going to Bauma (and you should), do stop by our stand and bend our ears. We are among the crane and access exhibits on stand F702/6.

Leigh W Sparrow

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