

The IMA of novelties on the way up

It will be an IMA of novelties: when the International Trade Fair for Amusement and Vending Machines opens its gates from 13 to 16 January 2009 at the Düsseldorf Exhibition Centre, the exhibitors will showcase various new and interesting products, as a successful start into the new business year. "For us, every year IMA is the leading trade fair for the new year and the entire industry," explains Mario Hoffmeister, Head of the Central Business Unit Communication of Gauselmann AG. "So we set ourselves up accordingly, and our customers may well be curious about the products that will be on show at the Group's trade fair stands. There will definitively be a large number of new products and product refinements, quite simply products which will make our customer's cash tills ring in the coming year."

This means that the upward trend will continue in an industry which must battle new licensing laws for its gambling machines again and again. Even so, Christopher Rörich, Head of Product Management Cash Winning Machines with NSM-Löwen Entertainment GmbH, likewise remains optimistic: "We expect a positive trade fair with a focus on advising customers. Topics such as the 'Technical Directive TR 4.0', its significance for machine operators and gamblers, but also Löwen's Service Offensive 2009 with a number of concrete proposals, provide ample scope for perfect customer advisory service. Of course we also



expect our new generation machines to sell well, it's going to be interesting!"

Due to the new Gambling Ordinance which allowed for a broad range of new commercial gambling machines with cash winning options, at this year's IMA a clear trend had emerged already towards a large variety of games combined in one machine. A direction which the industry continues to follow, as Hoffmeister knows: "One continuing trend for us is the Ideal-Multigamer: We offer it with a range of different casings, there are five different models altogether." This increasingly opens up new visitor potential for the amusement arcades: "Because of the multigamers and the variety of games they offer, a growing number of women are attracted to the amusement arcades who then enjoy gambling on these machines."



At the same time Gauselmann records continuing strong market demand for the classic wheel-based machines with cash winnings and is therefore also strongly represented with this segment at IMA.

As a result, the view of the industry of its future in the market is a positive one: "Generally speaking, the industry has taken a positive development since the new Gambling Ordinance came into effect, despite the political headwind from the state casinos etc. as well as other obstacles such as the protection of non-smokers, which we were able to overcome quite well on the whole by finding suitable solutions," Hoffmeister explains.

This corresponds to Rörich's experience: "Certainly many people used the year 2008 to stock up on the devices of the post-TR 3.3 generation. Even so, operators will look into the

new TR 4.0 directive and also organise their establishments accordingly. In this respect Löwen is well positioned in terms of new innovative machines and gambling systems. And in the area of follow-up licences, Löwen offers operators maximum protection of their investment even today.“

There is great potential currently emerging for the entire industry from the new trades which were introduced in 2008: “The Gauselmann Group also views the future with optimism, in particular as far as additional jobs in the industry are concerned,” Hoffmeister states. “With the two new trades introduced this year which on the whole got off to a good start, many new perspectives are opening up. In addition to the normal annual number of apprenticeships, the Gauselmann Group was able to offer another 38 apprenticeships as a result.“

For IMA 2009, which will run from 13 to 16 January, the host, the German Amusement and Vending Industry Association (VDAI) and Reed Exhibitions Deutschland GmbH as the organiser, expect over 200 exhibitors and more than 8,000 visitors. A broad range of amusement machines with cash winning options as well as the entire spectrum of electronic amusement machines, sports gaming machines as well as cash management systems and furnishing concepts for modern amusement arcades, will be on show.