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# GLOBAL VIEW

## Notes



### Taming the Tiger:

## AMT's Pavilion in the China International Machine Tool Show

By Michelle Bruno

The primary goal of the Association for Manufacturing Technology's (AMT) pavilion in the China International Machine Tool Show (CIMT) is to assist members of the organization with bringing their products to market in China. "We want [members] to look at the market, evaluate their ability to serve the market, and then make an informed decision," says Peter Eelman, vice-president, exhibitions and communications at AMT. Their turnkey package of pavilion services for member companies insulates participants from the logistical challenges of exhibiting in China. It is one of several pillars of support that the trade association offers American companies looking to investigate or maintain a presence in the one of the largest markets on the planet.

CIMT is one of crown jewels of international machine tool exhibitions. The biennial show features 1,100 companies from 28 countries and regions of the world. AMT's pavilion in the 2011 show will house 38 exhibitors in 2,300 square me-

ters (approximately 24,750 square feet). The pavilion package includes booth space, carpet, spotlights, information desk, walls, directory listing, security, cleaning service, chairs, fascia sign, pavilion signage and electrical power. Plus, exhibitors have free access to what Eelman refers to as a "headquarters away from home"—public space, Internet, fax machine, computers, private meeting space, and even Starbucks coffee.

AMT attempts to remove as many impediments as possible for its pavilion participants. All ordering and coordination for pavilion services is done through AMT's office in McClean, Virginia. AMT selects and supervises the stand contractor, freight forwarder, material handler, and other service providers. They also approve third-party contractors. Exhibitors may choose between an exhibitor manual in English or Chinese (for companies that prefer to have their Chinese distributors take care of the logistics). The association's long-standing relationship with China Machine Tool & Tool Builders' Association (CMTBA), the exhibition organizers, has helped it obtain a prime location on the show floor for the pavilion.

Although Peter Eelman has seen "marked" im-

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provement in the Chinese facilities and exhibiting conditions in the last decade, there are still challenges for foreign enterprises like AMT. “Communication can be difficult,” Edelman says. “Sometimes we don’t get timely answers or clear answers to questions.” Air quality inside the exhibition can also be an obstacle. “The concrete floors are not sealed so ¼” of concrete dust mixes with heavy exhaust from cranes, forklifts, and other equipment making it difficult to breathe,” he explains. The six-day move-in and four-day move-out can be taxing on the staff working inside the exhibition hall.

Customs formalities, particularly the shifting regulations on fumigating wooden crates, can be an issue for exhibitors. “It’s important to have people on the ground dealing specifically with [Sino-Trans], the Chinese customs authorities,” Eelman says. “Heavy lifting equipment including cranes are in “first class” condition, but the forklifts are a little beat up,” he adds. AMT has a staff on site before, during, and after the show to supervise the installation and dismantling of the pavilion and the equipment.

China is now the most important market for AMT’s members. It is the number one consumer of manufacturing technology in the world. “The need for innovation is surprisingly high. Contrary to what people may believe, China will have difficulty finding enough labor to satisfy the global appetite for its products,” Eelman explains. “At IMTS [AMT’s International

Manufacturing Technology Show in the U.S.], it is a victory if an exhibitor sells one machining center. There is a [Chinese] company from Shenzhen that purchased 6,000 machining centers,” he says.

Despite the huge role that the pavilion in CIMT plays in AMT’s overall strategy for China, it is only part of AMT’s program for assisting members looking to do business there. The association maintains a presence

in three Chinese cities: Beijing, Shanghai, and Guangzhou. The Chinese support staff helps AMT members year round with understanding the market, finding potential partners, and selecting distributors. AMT representatives also look for other trade shows in China that “are of a standard that American companies would accept,” Eelman says.

AMT helps members avoid costly mistakes in the complex and diverse Chinese market. “If you are going to do business in China, you have to learn who the

players are and make sure they’re the right ones. You have to do the visits, attend the banquets, meet the people, and become ‘somebody’ in the market. If you are afraid to travel, China is not the right market for you,” Eelman explains. As the first foreign trade association allowed into China in 1989 and a trusted partner of CMTBA, AMT is in the best position to help U.S. companies bring their products to the Chinese market or, at the very least, make a decision about whether China is the right market for them.



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