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World of Concrete Takes on India

By Michelle Bruno

No decision to organize an international exhibition should be taken lightly. The expense, internal and external resources required, not to mention the risk of depleting a well-known brand, are reasons enough to slowly and methodically plan the cloning of a show overseas. So it is with World of Concrete India, Hanley Wood's second foray outside the U.S., which is scheduled for October 24-26, 2013 in Hyderabad. According to Tom Cindric, vice president, the India show has been in the making for thirteen years.

Part of the plan

World of Concrete is a 39-year old annual institution that attracts 1,300 exhibiting companies and 50,000 registered industry professionals in more than 500,000 square feet of exhibit space. Hanley Wood's first international iteration of World of Concrete was in Mexico. The experience, says Cindric, "taught us the value of working

with a good local partner." In Mexico, Hanley Wood partnered with E.J. Krause de Mexico—a subsidiary of Bethesda, MD-based E.J. Krause & Associates.

The Mexico and India shows are part of a 13-year old plan to globalize the World of Concrete brand. "We have always been interested in going outside the U.S.," Cindric says. They have participated in trade missions in China, Europe and India and determined that India was a good fit. "Our global strategy hasn't changed. We are on the international [trade show] calendars now. Our largest [U.S.] exhibitors are international companies and we are part of the International Buyer Program," he adds.

Why India?

Figuring that they may have been a little too late for the boom in China, Hanley Wood focused their attention on India for a number of reasons. "There is an incredible amount of infrastructure building planned and the consumption of concrete is booming in India," Cindric

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explains. World of Concrete is heavily focused on education, a strategy that aligns nicely with the Indian Concrete Institute (ICI), the trade association that will provide local support for the event. World of Concrete India will co-locate with the four-day ICI-IWC Conference bringing 900 to 1,000 concrete architects and engineers into the city.

Hyderabad, India was a natural choice for the new show as well. It is located at the crossroads of the country's rail system connecting the north, south, east and west. The HITEX Exhibition Center, located in Hyderabad, is one of the most modern in the country as well. "We are trying to do something a little different. We are [intentionally] not going to New Delhi or Bangalore. I think Hyderabad has the best venue, but you have to be a smaller event to fit in there. For any international companies that come to India, we wanted to be able to say we were locating in a first-rate facility," Cindric says.



Overcoming challenges

Hanley Wood is relying on their local partner, Inter Ads Exhibitions, for the in-country logistics associated with the show. Since it's expected that 70% of the exhibiting companies will be from India, Inter Ads extensive experience in selling to Indian companies will complement Hanley Wood's international branding and marketing expertise. Inter Ads is also weighing in heavily on local options for registration, customs and general service contracting.

Cindric anticipates challenges coming primarily from organizing a show in a new venue for the first time. "Although most exhibitors will be able to show products without a problem, we are waiting to see whether we can

do demos and what the situation will be with the power and voltage conversion," Cindric says. One of the challenges will be trying to replicate the outdoor World of Concrete area at HITEX. "We want attendees to see equipment run and see concrete getting poured. As the show evolves, we will be able to do more and more," he adds.

Staying realistic

"The hardest part when you go international is to be realistic. You want to do it like a U.S. show, but you can't," Cindric admits. Although the difference in time zones (some 14 hours) is a small burden, there is no language barrier. "Our Indian partner is fantastic. They are operationally sound and strong," he says. Hanley Wood has also had help from international trade show consultant, Cherif Moujabber of Creative Expos, who has worked with other organizations to launch shows in India, including some in Hyderabad.

Hanley Wood has a three-year plan to build the show in India. "We understand from other launches and Mexico that it takes some investment to be successful," Cindric says. In year one, they expect 200 exhibitors to occupy 1,500 to 2,000 square meters of space. They are looking at anticipated attendance of 1,500 to 2,000. By year three, the company expects to earn a profit that they can reinvest in the show. Over time, they hope to forge a strong relationship with ICI and potentially organize events in other Indian cities. "When you take your show globally, there are intangibles in terms of exposing the 'mother' brand. We were in Mexico for five years and after show ended, we had a larger attendance from Mexico at the U.S. show," Cindric explains.

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