

TRANSFORMING THE EXPO BUSINESS IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS: CONCEPTS AND IDEAS FOR FUTURE GROWTH

ТРАНСФОРМАЦИЯ ВЫСТАВОЧНОЙ ДЕЯТЕЛЬНОСТИ В РЕСПУБЛИКЕ БЕЛАРУСЬ: КОНЦЕПЦИЯ И НАПРАВЛЕНИЯ РАЗВИТИЯ

Автором внесены предложения по трансформации выставочной деятельности в Республике Беларусь. Указано на необходимость принятия концепции развития выставочной деятельности в Республики Беларусь. Предложен механизм использования бюджетных средств для частичного финансирования участия белорусских предприятий в выставках за рубежом. Показана целесообразность перехода от участия в универсальных выставках к специализированным, а также необходимость использования международных выставок для принятия решения о создании субъекта товаропроводящей сети за рубежом. Обоснована необходимость строительства в Минске современного конгрессно-выставочного комплекса. Усовершенствована методика оценки эффективности участия в международных выставках. Предлагается организовать подготовку специалистов по выставочной деятельности в высшей школе Республики Беларусь, а также усовершенствовать нормативно-правовую базу выставочной деятельности.

The future of sustainable economic growth in the Republic of Belarus and its tactical priorities are in a crucial degree connected with the export potential development on the basis of raising competitiveness of real and service sectors of economy and comprehensive integration of Belarusian economy in the global economic system. One of the most effective ways to boost foreign economic activity in the Republic of Belarus is to participate in international trade fairs, within the country and abroad.

Exhibition business allows the economy of the country to benefit from infrastructure development, forming an integrated economic and information field which allows economic entities to study the market, demonstrate new products, promote goods and develop business cooperation. From the government's perspective, trade fairs are a factor of intensifying integration and investment processes, employment growth, promotion of scientific and technological progress, increase in budget revenues from taxes of exhibition organizers and companies comprising exhibition infrastructure.

A detailed analysis of the expo business in the Republic of Belarus revealed that despite a relatively high return on investment, the system of organizing international exhibitions in Minsk and national expositions at global trade fairs abroad has grave problems and needs restructuring to ensure high levels of success.

The main focus of transformation should be an increase in the number of *specialized* exhibition events as opposed to the general trade fairs currently favored by the Ministry of Trade of Belarus. One of the main shortcomings of exhibition business in Belarus is that existing procedure of state budget financial means usage for partial reimbursement of the expenses bore by Belarusian companies while participating in international fairs provides for only National events. At the same time all National Belarusian expositions are organized only in general trade fairs, even though nowadays the main type of exhibition event is a specialized trade fair. Partial financial compensation for companies (including private firms) that independently participate in specialized trade fairs also seems appropriate.

Taking into account the language barrier, lack of awareness of business ethics, insufficient overall competence of personnel involved in organizing participation of a particular company in a trade fair, and the fact that Belarusian companies that participate in international fairs do not carry out preliminary pre-exhibition work, training of exhibition experts in higher school is necessary. Moreover, transformation of exhibition business in Belarus predetermines the demand for highly qualified exhibition professionals. The minimal requirement is at least 2 500 experts.

Isolation of exhibition business from commodity distribution network of Belarusian enterprises is another important shortcoming. It seems that participation in trade fairs will allow the Belarusian exporters in the most rational way to determine the adequacy of foreign markets for creating an entity of commodity distribution network. Hardly any other marketing element possesses the intrinsic to exhibitions ability to fully demonstrate a company and its goods and services, enjoying personal contacts with clients at the same time. Personal trust relationships between business partners become today the most influential factor in making decisions. Proximity to buyers, as a strategic factor of success, appears to be the key element in international competition.

Considering the shortage as well as physical and moral obsolescence of existing specialized exhibition premises in the capital of the Republic of Belarus, a construction of new exhibition complex is necessary. In the past, the most significant trade fairs organized in Minsk were held in venues unsuitable for large-scale exhibitions due to the fact that existing exhibition grounds were not spacious enough to accommodate all exhibitors. A new exhibition complex will not only increase the number of trade fairs and broaden the scope of industries represented, but also promote overall foreign trade activity in the country. In compliance with world best practices in trade fairs sector, the new exhibition complex must include, above exhibition ground, a space for hosting congresses, business-centre, hotel, restaurants and other elements necessary for exhibition infrastructure. Specialized exhibition halls are also in high demand in regional centers of Belarus. Their construction will stir up local exhibition activity and the economy of a region as a whole. Exhibition held in regional centers will satisfy the local markets with a more qualitative and competitive products, increase sales of goods and services and raise the prestige of regions.

One of the biggest problems of the exhibition system in Belarus is the absence of useful benchmarks and tools to determine and measure success. The existing methodology developed by the Ministry of Trade does not take into account the «deferred effect» factor of the trade fair. The indirect effect or the image awareness component of the exhibition event is also not considered. In our opinion, further improvement of the methodology of determining the progress of participation results should be enhanced in the mentioned directions.

Upgrading the legislative base in the field of exhibition business seems crucial. The first-priority task is implementation of concept of exhibition business progress in the Republic of Belarus. Such concept must contain a system of legislative, economic and organizational regulations and stipulate formation of exhibition business successful functioning general strategy. In addition, the exhibition business lacks special customs rules that govern system of simplified temporary import and export of exhibits. In the long-term outlook elaboration of an all-embracing legislative act — Law on exhibition business in the Republic of Belarus, where rights and obligations of trade fair organizers and participants will be described in detail seems appropriate.

Even though conversion of our country's economy to an innovative path of development is declared as one of the main goals of governmental economic policy, trade fairs specializing in innovative goods make up less than 10% of the total amount. Nanotechnology and nanomaterials, innovations, air and space technology, atom energy and ecology are some of the potential industries that can be a focus of upcoming exhibitions in the Republic of Belarus.

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АНАЛИЗ ИННОВАЦИОННОЙ АКТИВНОСТИ РЕГИОНА В УСЛОВИЯХ ГЛОБАЛЬНОГО КРИЗИСА

В условиях мирового финансового кризиса инновации следует рассматривать в качестве важнейшего фактора обеспечения конкурентоспособности белорусской экономики и формирования ее стабильности. Инновации оказывают существенное влияние на объемы производства и реализации продукции, на ее качественные показатели и эксплуатационные характеристики, издержки производства, на рентабельность предприятия.

В Республике Беларусь инновационно-активные производственные организации в промышленности составляют только 14 %. Для сравнения в России их доля составляет 9 %, в США средний показатель инновационной активности колеблется в пределах 30 %.

По данным Государственного комитета по науке и технологиям и Министерства статистики и анализа Республики Беларусь, факторы, препятствующие развитию инноваций в промышленности Республики Беларусь, могут быть объединены в три группы: