

A Global Glimpse

2018 International Hardware Fair Focuses on Digital Opportunities

Get a head start on your competition by visiting the EISENWARENMESSE International Hardware Fair (IHF) to see a sneak peek of upcoming products from leading manufacturers. The event draws thousands of vendors, manufacturers and business owners from across the world to Cologne, Germany, for four days of product showcases, networking opportunities, informational sessions and a global glimpse of the industry.

On March 4-7, more than 2,700 exhibitors from 50 countries will present their newest product innovations inside Koelnmesse, the sixth-largest event space in the world. IHF helps business owners see the latest international manufacturing trends up close and personal and find products that could mark their operations as must-visit destinations.

The event features products in the tools, industrial supplies, fasteners and fixings, fittings and home improvement products categories from internationally recognized brands. IHF also dedicates space to new companies in its Startup Village, helping emerging business owners connect directly with industry leaders.

“The event is virtually fully booked; all well-known manufacturers are represented,” Katharina C. Hamma, chief operating officer for Koelnmesse, says. “This underlines the significance of the trade for the entire international hardware industry.”



International Hardware Fair By the Numbers



IHF planners anticipate **44,000** visitors from around the world will attend the four-day event.



About **2,700** vendors, including **1,650** distinct tool manufacturers, will fill more than **15.5 million** square feet of event space at Koelnmesse.

“Business owners should seek out new ideas, not only from other retailers in their communities, but from business owners in other countries, too.”
—T.J. Comstock, Northwest Hardware



International Insight

This year, IHF is focusing on how businesses can best compete in the digital economy. It's devoting its two-day dSummit lecture event to the topic. Keynote speakers will present hardware-specific information on how digitalization trends are shaping consumer behavior, supply logistics and the economy at large.

Even if Cologne feels a world away, North American business owners say it's a worthwhile trip.

“I decided to attend IHF this year to see what ideas people in other countries are coming up with to better serve their customers. I want to see how other businesses are using technology to help their operations grow and be more efficient,” T.J. Comstock, owner of Northwest Hardware in Billings, Montana, says.

Comstock says IHF is one of the few industry events that draws visitors from across the world, giving business owners and manufacturers an open forum to explore new strategies.

“I think all retailers need to step out of their comfort zones,” Comstock says. “Business owners should seek out new ideas, not only from other retailers in their communities, but from business owners in other countries, too.”

IHF takes place every two years in Cologne. More event details and registration information is available at eisenwarenmesse.com.