



Building a Better Gear Expo

Gear Expo 2005 promises to provide a better experience for attendees, as the organizers have revamped the show to give visitors more educational opportunities and the ability to see more gear manufacturing equipment.



Kurt Medert

A major exhibitor just pulled out of Gear Expo. Another major exhibitor has just been acquired by one of the industry's biggest suppliers, and they're considering consolidating booths. But Kurt Medert isn't worried. "These things happen," he says, taking it in stride.

As vice president of AGMA's business management division, Medert is responsible for the success of Gear Expo—and he's been through this scenario before. There are always changes, right up until the end, he says.

Despite those changes, the confidence level at the AGMA is high. Medert figures that the show will sell around 41,000–42,000 square feet of booth space. With two and a half months left, the show is at 39,000 square feet, the level it achieved last time, in 2003. "And we're still selling space," Medert says.

Despite the fact that the AGMA derives much of its revenue from the sales of booth space at Gear Expo, that's not really how they measure the success of the show, Medert says.

The real key is the foot traffic, and that's why Medert and the show's organizers are enthusiastic about the upcoming expo, he says.

"The economy is up. Most of the economic indexes are up," Medert says, adding that a good economy usually means good attendance at the show.

And the AGMA has made major changes in the expo this year in order to attract that foot traffic, to make the show more appealing to gear industry visitors.

AGMA's advertisements for the show use the phrase "You spoke...We Listened" to highlight their efforts to make the show more attractive to potential visitors.

After the 2003 show, the association hired an independent market researcher to help it find out what show visitors really wanted from Gear Expo. The researcher did surveys and held focus group sessions to get that information.

"The results told us that we needed to provide more educational opportunities at the show," Medert says. "We also found that people wanted to see more gear manufacturing equipment on the show floor."

Educational Opportunities

Educational opportunities at the show have been expanded dramatically. AGMA's Fall Technical Meeting, which will include more than 20 presentations of technical papers, is being held at Cobo Hall in conjunction with the show. Previously, the FTM was usually held on different dates, in a different location.

Aside from the FTM, the association has coordinated with other organizations to increase the number of seminars and technical education opportunities available. At past shows, SME has hosted technical seminars, and that organization will do so again.

But new to this year's show are seminars being hosted by the American Bearing Manufacturers Association and the Forging Industry Association.

Also, AGMA will be holding three sessions of the classroom portion of its Basic Gear Training course at the show.

All of the above technical education opportunities cost extra to attend, and they each have their own schedules. Complete information will be available at www.gearexpo.com as the show approaches.

But there will also be some free educational opportunities available right on the show floor. Gear Expo 2005 will include a "Solutions Center," where exhibitors will hold presentations and demonstrations about their products, technology or areas of expertise.

Each presentation will last about 20 minutes, and there will be two presentations per hour, Medert says. So far, the seminars are scheduled to run Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday, October 17-19, but response from the exhibitors has been enthusiastic, and the seminars may have to be expanded to Sunday, the first day of the show.

The following companies have signed up to host presentations in the Solutions Center: Capstan Atlantic, Chamfermatic Inc., DuPont Polymers, Emuge Corp., Forest City Gear Co., *Gear Technology*/Randall Publishing, Geiger Maschinen GmbH, Gleason Corp., Höfler Maschinenbau GmbH, Ipsen International Inc., JRM International Inc., Kapp Technologies, KISSsoft AG, Nissei Corp. of America, NSW LLC, Ohio State University Gear Lab, Perry Technology, Power Engineering & Manufacturing Ltd., Reishauer Corp., REM Chemicals Inc., Sunnen Products Co., Tech Induction Corp. and VCST Powertrain Components Inc.

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A full schedule of the Solutions Center seminars will be available soon at www.gearexpo.com.

More Equipment

Medert expects that visitors will see more equipment on the show floor than at the last Gear Expo. One of the biggest differences is that this year's show will be held in Detroit. "We always do well in Detroit with equipment," he says.

But the show's organizers didn't want to trust anything to chance, so they went out of their way to try to make it easier for exhibitors to bring equipment to the show. "We tried to make it less expensive and a more friendly environment for exhibitors to bring machinery," Medert says.

In part, that meant negotiating with Cobo Hall and the logistics companies at the show to try to keep the prices down for companies bringing in equipment.

So, if people want to see the most modern gear manufacturing equipment in the world, they should come to Gear Expo, Medert says, because the show's organizers have done everything they could to make sure it's going to be there.

Location, Location, Location

Medert is also banking on the show's location in Detroit to help attract visitors. Because of its location in the heart of America's manufacturing belt and its proximity to Big Three automotive manufacturing, Detroit has always been a big draw for the show, he says.

Also, Medert points out that the city has undergone dramatic change since even the last time the show was there, in 2001. He highlights the completely remodeled airport and the vast amount of new construction in the downtown area, led by the completely renovated Renaissance Center, as key examples of the changes which should make the city very attractive to potential Gear Expo visitors.

Medert and the show's organizers are so enthusiastic about the changes in Detroit that they've already booked Gear Expo 2007 to be there as well.

The association has only just begun taking registrations for the show, so it's still too early to say whether the attendance will be as great as the organizers hope. But Medert is encouraged by what he hears from the industry. "Most of the people we talk to are extremely busy," he says. "Business is good, and they're looking forward to the show." ■

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Gear Technology Offers Advice at Gear Expo Solutions Center

Members of our staff will be presenting two educational seminars for those who are interested in marketing in the gear industry. Come join us to learn about the best techniques and practices in making sure the marketplace knows about your products and services—in print and online.

"Six-Pack Ads"...how to put muscle in your media message!

Is your media communication firm and defined, or flabby and weak?

The "Six-Pack Ads" presentation will provide you with time-tested techniques for creating ads that strengthen your company's image and add power to your value proposition.

Is Your Website Striking Out?

In the 1980s movie "Field of Dreams," the catchphrase was, "If you build it, they will come." But what worked for Kevin Costner doesn't work for your website. If you built it, and you're still waiting for the visitors to come, then this information session is for you! We'll cover some of the basics of good web design, including the three things your website MUST include. We'll also talk about measuring your website's traffic. You'll learn where to look to know how much traffic you're really getting and where it's coming from. Finally, we'll address search engine performance and other strategies to bring them in by the droves.

The exact times and days of these seminars will be available soon at www.gearexpo.com.

