

Presse

Press

Messe Düsseldorf embeds crucial Theme of Digitalisation in the Management Board

Dr. Christian Plenge appointed New Division Director “Digital Strategy and Communication”

CEO Dornscheidt: “Digital strategy determines future business success”



1 November 2017 saw Messe Düsseldorf GmbH establish a new Division called “Digital Strategy and Communication” to be headed up by the newly appointed Division Director Dr. Christian Plenge (51). In this function Dr. Plenge will be responsible for designing all digital transformation processes at Messe Düsseldorf. These include the development of strategic initiatives to drive the dovetailing of digital approaches with existing business models and to develop new digital-driven business models.

By taking this move in its organisational structure and thereby anchoring this important topic in management, Messe Düsseldorf has underlined its identity as a digital company – something that has been lived out in day-to-day work for a long time already. “By appointing a new Division Director for Digital Strategy and Communication we are underscoring how important we see digitalisation for the future of our company,” explains Werner M. Dornscheidt, President and CEO of Messe Düsseldorf GmbH.

“Messe Düsseldorf has always been a pioneer in digitalisation: from our first trade fair website for drupa in May 1995 to the first Digital Signage Visitor Information System with wayfinding in Germany that we have used since spring this year. Management at Messe Düsseldorf is convinced that a viable digital strategy as well as the matching hard and software for up-to-date digital services will decide on our future business success and secure our position among the top-5 trade fair companies worldwide,” adds Dornscheidt.

Dr. Christian Plenge obtained a PhD from RWTH Aachen with the distinction “summa cum laude”, for which he also received the Friedrich Wilhelm Prize for outstanding scientific achievements, after winning two awards for his diploma as an electrical engineer. In his subsequent career he acquired many years of experience in the strategic and operative management of complex organisations and successfully worked as a product, innovation and IT manager in telecommunications, retail and logistics as well as in strategy consulting.

“I look forward to leveraging my experience for the Düsseldorf trade fair company, whose No. 1 trade fair EuroShop I already know well as both an exhibitor and visitor,” explains Dr. Christian Plenge on his first working day at Messe Düsseldorf GmbH, and goes on to say: “I am aware of the current issues and challenges currently facing trade fair companies in the increasingly digital world and in view of Industry 4.0. To rise to these challenges new solutions must be developed and all technical possibilities exhausted to offer trade fair customers added value and the best service possible.”

Dr. Christian Plenge last served Telefonica Germany GmbH & Co OHG for four years as Director of IT Planning, Demand & Delivery. In this position he was in charge of the implementation and operative control of all IT projects, also in the wake of the acquisition and integration of Telefonica and E-Plus serving as a contact for all Managing Directors and as the central interface between all sales units and IT service providers. Prior to this assignment he was responsible for the same range of functions as Director of Product Development and Process Management at E-Plus Mobilfunk GmbH. Earlier positions included a position as Senior Associate at Booz Allen Hamilton and a nine-year division management function at METRO Systems GmbH. As part of this position, Dr. Plenge built up the innovation management of METRO Group and its team designed both the Future Store as a test centre for retail innovations and the RFID Innovation Center. Dr. Plenge is married with three children.

“I am happy that we succeeded in recruiting a proven expert in Dr. Plenge, who has already given proof of his innovative power and leadership qualities in his previous jobs. Dr. Plenge comes with the best prerequisites for continuing Messe Düsseldorf’s successful path of digitalisation and developing

new fields of business,” comments Joachim Schäfer, the Managing Director in charge of this new division. Under the guidance of Dr. Plenge the Marketing Services, Press, IT and Inhouse Services departments will be pooled in the new division.

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The Messe Düsseldorf Group:

With a turnover of around EUR 443m in 2016, the Messe Düsseldorf Group maintained its position as one of Germany's most successful trade fair companies. To the tune of 32,100 exhibitors presented their products to 1.6m trade visitors at events in Düsseldorf this year. They were joined by half a million visitors to various conventions. About 50 trade fairs were held in Düsseldorf, including 23 No. 1 events in five areas of expertise: machinery, plants and equipment, retail, skilled crafts and services, medicine and healthcare, fashion and lifestyle, and also leisure. In addition, there were about 70 proprietary, joint and contracted events outside Germany, demonstrating that the Messe Düsseldorf Group is a leading global platform for export. Messe Düsseldorf GmbH is the trade fair company with the highest level of internationalism in capital goods exhibitions. In 2016 Messe Düsseldorf's proprietary events in machinery, plants and equipment attracted approx. 72 per cent international exhibitors and trade visitors from other countries to the Rhine. In all, Düsseldorf trade fairs were attended by customers from about 180 countries. The Group runs a global network of sales offices in 137 countries (74 international representations) as well as centres of expertise in 8 countries.