Despite the global economic slowdown and decreasing sales figures in the industry, Bauma China 2012—an international trade fair for construction machinery and transport equipment—exceeded the expectations of many who exhibited and flabbergasted those fascinated by the technology that gorged all 300,000 m² of the Shanghai New International Expo Centre.

Held in China’s most populated city with more than 23 million people, it is no surprise that most of the industry’s leading names made an appearance. “Bauma China is ‘the’ trade show for us in China. The exposure it provides us to key decision-makers in the industry is extremely valuable,” Kevin Curtis, President and CEO of US company Besser, said.

“Bauma China has brought us a tremendous amount of direct orders. This trade show always has the same objective with its exhibitors—to expand and grow together,” Zhichao Chen, Marketing Director at Sany Heavy Industry, added. That positive feedback also translated into favourable attendance, with the 2012 exhibition raking in more than 180,000 visitors from 141 countries—representing a 16 per cent increase from 2010.

That record figure was complemented by the 2,718 companies that exhibited, including more than 1,700 from China and approximately 1,000 international guests from 38 countries—demonstrating the industry’s undiminished interest in the Chinese commercial vehicle industry. After the host country, most exhibitors came from Germany (172), Italy (122), the US (116), Korea (67) and Japan (49).

“Bauma China braved all market...
tendencies. In this respect, it was held just at the right time,” said Eugen Egetenmeir, Managing Director of Messe München. According to Egetenmeir, Bauma China’s exhibitors were able to occupy every inch of the 300,000m² space, which was 30 per cent more than in 2010 and an event first.

While Bauma China mostly revolved around the construction industry and earthmoving equipment, including related equipment and tools, the exhibition also provided the opportunity for commercial vehicle companies to showcase the latest in truck and trailer design, with Europe’s trailer elite trying to tap new sales potential outside the EU.

German trailer expert Kögel, for instance, displayed the new Cargo model, which is supposed to combine low tare weight, large available volume and a high vertical load in one curtain-sided solution. The trailer was attached to a Shaanxi truck, a brand of Kögel’s new Chinese joint venture partner, Weichai. “We wanted to acknowledge the great work Weichai has done in supporting us on the Chinese market,” said Volker Seitz, Director of Communication and Business Development at Kögel.

“Coupling our trailer to the truck was a great way to visualise our new partnership. Bauma China provided us a wonderful opportunity to connect with our local clients and demonstrate our commitment to the Chinese market. We are very pleased with the number of customers who visited and the interest generated from our display.”
Another company that has realised the on-going potential of China’s construction sector is Italian low loader specialist, Cometto, whose Bauma stand generated plenty of interest, according to Export Sales Manager, Alberto Di Stefano. “If you want to connect your business to the Chinese market, then you need to be present at Bauma China,” said Di Stefano, emphasizing the huge potential for heavy transport equipment in the construction market.

Business analysts expect the Chinese construction equipment market to be worth some US$100 billion (€75.9 billion) by 2016 – driven by the country’s urbanisation and on-going infrastructure investment and opening up great growth opportunities in the heavy-duty transport segment. Next to Cometto, the show also attracted French heavyweight, Nicolas, as well as Germany’s low loader elite, including Kamag, Goldhofer and Scheuerle. Local companies Suzhou Dafang and Zhengzhui New Dafang also tried to secure a slice of the multi-billion-Euro pie.

On the specialty equipment front, Swedish steel expert SSAB displayed a U-shaped tipper body based on the widely used Hardox wear plate and a Domex sub-frame, following the heavy-duty segment’s example and demonstrating on-going faith in the Chinese marketplace.

In that sense, Bauma China served as a litmus test for the entire industry, which has accepted the reduced demand during 2012 as somewhat of a learning experience. “I think the consolidation during 2012 in China is no bad thing. There is no doubt that the market overheated,” Ed Rapp, Caterpillar Group President, Construction Industry said in Shanghai. “In the long term, it will be good for the industry.” The 7th instalment of Bauma China will open on 25 November 2014. GT

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