



## ISE 2020 ,11-14 February, RAI Amsterdam Crisis Handling

Before the start of the crisis ISE 2020 had almost 1400 ( 258 from China) exhibitors on just under 54000 net m2 of space sold.

Attendee Pre -reg was trending at around 15% over the previous year, but as the crisis began to become Headline News we saw the pre-reg slowing down.

On the 27th January as issues in China (Wuhan lockdown) started to really hit the news we started to contact our Chinese exhibitors to ascertain which ones came from the region or had staff from that region. The biggest difficulty was that it was still Chinese New Year and contacting them was difficult.

By the beginning of the following week we were able to contact many of our Chinese exhibitors and over the next days to establish if:

1. They had been restricted from Travelling due to travel bans
2. Unable to travel due to flight cancellations
3. If they had European Offices or distributors who might man their stands
4. If they still intended to participate at ISE 2020.

For those restricted or unable to travel (with documented support) we offered to transfer their paid fees to ISE 2021 and also negotiated with the venue to cancel any service (electricity, Rigging, furniture and other hire equipment) fees.

At this time we also began to experience negative attention on social media, particularly from one industry individual. It caused uncertainty and nervousness not only amongst our exhibitors but also attendees.

After assessing all of the available "Official" Information (Primarily WHO, ECDC, RIVM & GGZ) we formulated a clear statement on what was being recommended not only on travel advice but also what each individual could do to reduce the risk whilst still attending an exhibition. We then communicated with all of our exhibitors to update them on the situation and the advice given. We also decided to update this advice on the [www.iseurope.org](http://www.iseurope.org) website daily whether there was anything new to report or not. In this way we could show that we have assessed up to date information.

Our biggest enemy then became the rumor mill on social media which created even more uncertainty about health safety. This ensued in 1 or 2 cancellations from small companies. An announcement then became public that LG (ISE's 2<sup>nd</sup> largest exhibitor) had cancelled its' participation at World Mobile Congress in Barcelona. Social media and the press began speculate if ISE would be next and how many others would also cancel ISE. We then initiated discussion with LG who let us know that they would cancel and would prepare an announcement shortly.

We received calls and emails from many key exhibitors asking if ISE would still go ahead to which our answer was a categorical yes unless we were instructed by the relevant official authorities otherwise.

Move in had already started and there were many rumors not only about LG (who in fact had already started construction of their 900m2 booth) but other major industry names had cancelled their presence at ISE 2020.

We updated our health and safety advice and procedures daily on our website as well as onsite but now also issued information in our newsletters to exhibitors and then extended that attendees by email.

We informed Exhibitors and potential attendees of:

- WHO Hygiene recommendations
- WHO advice on Travel
- That based on these recommendations we would increase the Hygiene opportunities by installing additional Sanitisers around the RAI as well as distributing additional personal Hand Sanitisers Free of Charge to anyone at the show.

The rumors of cancellation of other brands then increased on social media and we needed activity to counter this. I and the ISE onsite staff started our own campaign documenting construction progress of many exhibitors and their crews on the floor and posted these across all social media channels. Many more exhibitors then followed suit and started to do the same and as a result we were able to quell much of the rumor and disinformation.

Despite this we still had 50 Chinese companies who had to cancel due inability to travel and another 22 non-Chinese companies who cancelled by choice.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> February (two days before opening) Storm Ciara (force 10/ up to 100km/h in places) made landfall in Northern Europe and proceed to over the next 3 days to close down Airports, Railways and roads all the way through to southern Europe. It forced a total shutdown of Schiphol (the 14<sup>th</sup> largest in the World and 3<sup>rd</sup> largest in Europe) Amsterdam's Airport. It also forced shutdowns in all, surrounding countries including UK and Germany (ISE's largest attendee regions are Benelux, UK & Germany) This continued until day 2 of ISE 2020.

At close on Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February ISE's attendance was a little more than 26% down on the previous year. Despite this exhibitors have reported record business as well as huge satisfaction on their results of the show. ISE moves to Barcelona next year and rebooking (signed contracts) have been already confirmed already for 62,000net m2 from 85% of our exhibitors (time did not allow us to deal with all of them).