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the maritime business hub

SMM DIGITAL: Looking Forward To Seeing You Online

SMM, the leading international maritime trade fair, will not be held as a hybrid event on Hamburg's exhibition campus in February 2021 as originally planned. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Hamburg Messe und Congress is instead organising a purely digital event for the maritime community, SMM DIGITAL – The Maritime Business Hub, as a virtual meeting place. Exhibitors and customers from around the world will be able to discuss today's and tomorrow's maritime challenges online, and follow conferences featuring top-ranking experts.

Hamburg, 04/11/2020 – Amid soaring infection numbers and waning hopes for a quick return to normal life, the second COVID-19 infection wave is keeping a firm grip on the world, with massive consequences for the trade fair industry. In the given circumstances, events without physical presence are preferable. In December 2020, [WindEnergy Hamburg](#) will be the first digital trade fair launched by Hamburg Messe und Congress. Its example will be followed by SMM, the leading international maritime trade fair, in February 2021: "After close consultations with the exhibition committee and government institutions, we have decided to host SMM 2021 as a purely digital event. The progress of the coronavirus pandemic and the resulting restrictions have rendered it impossible to come up with a reliable plan for a physical trade fair," said **Bernd Aufderheide, President and CEO of Hamburg Messe und Congress GmbH**. "By making this timely decision in favour of a digital SMM, we provide our exhibitors and visitors with a sound basis for planning while giving them an idea how they will be able to network successfully in February 2021 despite the pandemic. What is clear right now is that the experiences we are gathering as an event organiser today will have a positive effect on future physical events. By leveraging various digital services we will be able to further increase the international scope of our trade fairs and provide our customers with substantial added value."

New Maritime Business Hub

The SMM team is working full steam on creating formats that will bring together the maritime community digitally from 2 to 5 February 2021. The core component is a newly-developed Maritime Business Hub: This powerful platform will enable international exhibitors to present themselves online and interact with potential customers while avoiding the personal contact that is unavoidable at a physical exhibition stand. Exhibitors may choose among several digital packages that differ in scope and range of services. Packages may be booked through the [SMM](#) website. "Of course, after all those months of social distancing we were all looking forward to a physical or hybrid SMM. However, the current development of the pandemic leaves a digital SMM as the only option. I am therefore excited that over the past months we have been able to combine our forces and develop a digital version of SMM 2021 for the maritime community," said **Claus Ulrich Selbach, Business Unit Director – Maritime and Technology Fairs & Exhibitions at Hamburg Messe und Congress GmbH**.



The new digital platform will allow SMM participants to network, educate themselves, and share information about innovative products as well as industry news, and to do so even beyond the four-day event in February 2021. "The platform will remain active until SMM 2022. This means our exhibitors and partners can present themselves continuously until the next physical gathering, and intensify their business networks by utilising our large database," said Selbach. Furthermore, the platform will provide the maritime community with current industry news and deliver special events on specific topics on a regular basis, significantly expanding the traditional services offered by SMM.

Knut Ørbeck-Nilssen, CEO of DNV GL – Maritime appreciates the positive aspects of the current situation: "The pandemic has demonstrated that so much can be achieved through digital means and that the maritime industry is more than capable of adapting to new ways of working. During these very challenging times, more than ever before safety must be at the forefront of every decision we make. I am therefore pleased that SMM has shown the foresight and sound judgment to move next year's SMM onto a digital platform," said Ørbeck-Nilssen.

"As COVID-19 puts live events on hold, we very much look forward to participating in Digital SMM," stressed **Sean Fernback, President, Wärtsilä Voyage**. "A maritime phenomenon not to be missed, I'm sure the virtual experience will also surpass expectations to reach die-hard and new audiences like never before."

Living the motto

"Driving The Maritime Transition": The motto of SMM 2021 is not only reflected by digital exhibitor presentations and the content of the expert conferences featuring top-ranking panellists, such as the Maritime Future Summit. Participation itself has transformed digitally, as well: From 2 until 5 February 2021, visitors can attend SMM Digital simply with the click of a mouse button. Furthermore, all items on the agenda recorded as video streams will be available for viewing online after the end of SMM 2021.

For further information on SMM DIGITAL – The Maritime Business Hub please go to www.smm-hamburg.com

About SMM

SMM, the leading international maritime trade fair, normally takes place at the Hamburg Messe und Congress (HMC) exhibition complex every two years. Due to the COVID-19 crisis, the 29th issue of the trade fair will take place as a fully digital event from 2 to 5 February 2021. From ship owners to shipyards, and through to suppliers, SMM will reflect the entire value chain of the maritime industry on the newly-introduced Maritime Business Hub "SMM DIGITAL". Decision-



makers, experts and multipliers from all parts of the world will meet online, representing companies of all sizes, from global market leaders to start-ups. This makes SMM the largest international digital innovation platform of the maritime sector.

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