



The Dealmaker

Steve Monnington of Mayfield Media Strategies runs the rule over the latest global exhibition deals

Tarsus don't hang about. Less than 2 months after their de-listing as a plc and acquisition by Charterhouse have completed, they've announced two new deals – in China and Egypt.

The China acquisition sees them acquire 70% of Shenzhen Zhong Xin Cai Exhibition Company, owner of Touch China & 3D Glass Expo, creating a 6th Chinese JV for them. It's their first entry into the electronics sector there – one of the new sectors where they aim to deploy the Charterhouse capital - and it adds to their base of exhibitions in Shenzhen which includes SIUF (International Brand Underwear Fair) and Hometex (home furnishings). Touch China is in competition with Reed's C-Touch and Display which Reed acquired in 2015 from a local organiser.

Meanwhile in Egypt they have created Tarsus Egypt as a joint venture with Amr Shawki, Chairman of local organiser, Egytec. Shawki has launched many exhibitions in Egypt over the years and he sold his Electricx, Mefsec (Fire & Security) and Solar-Tec Exhibitions to Informa in 2014. Initially Tarsus Egypt will concentrate on replicating shows from their portfolio, the first of which will be Zuchex Cairo.

Tarsus acquired Zuchex in Turkey when they bought 70% of Life Medya in 2012 (and subsequently acquired the remaining 30%). We can expect to see other replications from their Turkish and Middle East portfolio and no doubt some acquisitions too.

There's always a lot of speculation about how long Private Equity firms intend to hold their investment before exiting but I think we have a new record for the shortest. LDC acquired conference producer FC Business Intelligence (FCBI) at the end of August 2018 and have now sold it on to Thomson Reuters a little over 13 months later. FCBI will become part of Reuters Events and one suspects management pressure as this is clearly a much more strategic play for them than straight PE ownership.

Easyfairs have stepped up their M&A activity with two deals this month. The acquisition of Futurebuild Events finally brings the Ecobuild saga to a conclusion. Ecobuild was acquired by UBM through its acquisition of International Business Events in 2011 for around £50m. The show went downhill and was taken off UBM's hands through a management buy-out in 2017 by the divisional director, Martin

Hurn. Having rebranded as Futurebuild and having re-vitalised the show, Hurn has now sold to Easyfairs but will continue to run the business with plans to launch more events in the sector. Easyfairs' portfolio of building & construction exhibitions, currently spans Belgium, the Netherlands, Sweden and Denmark.

Easyfair's second deal takes them to Italy with a majority stake in Packaging Première in Milan, a exhibition that focusses on packaging for luxury goods such as fashion, cosmetics, wines and spirits and fine foods. The show, which has run three times so far, joins Easyfair's portfolio of 31 packaging shows and marks their first real move into the Italian market.

Finally, Deutsche Messe has acquired three digital events in Australia and New Zealand from Australian event organizer The Eventful Group who also organise a number of other events – primarily tech conferences – in Australia and South Africa. The events sold are Legal Innovation and Tech Fest, held in Sydney and HR Innovation and Tech Fest which takes place in both Sydney and Auckland NZ. The shows will be part of Hannover Fairs Australia which already organises editions of CEBIT and CEMAT there.

