

Basel, 16th May, 2023

EMECA Best Exhibition Launch Award - BELA 2023

The National Outdoor Expo 2022 organised by Raccoon Media Group and held at the NEC Birmingham is the winner of the first BELA Award 2023

EMECA has awarded Raccoon Media Group the BELA - Best Exhibition Launch Award 2023 for its outstanding achievement with the National Outdoor Expo 2022.

EMECA created the BELA Best New Exhibition Launch Award on the occasion of its 30th Anniversary last year, to mark the strong comeback after the pandemic. The aim is to draw attention to new organisers, show themes and formats to highlight the innovativeness and attractiveness of the trade fairs industry. At the same time, EMECA intends to foster the resilience of the exhibition sector by showcasing examples of innovative approaches, active creation of new exhibitions and outstanding entrepreneurship. The BELA Award is given to the best first edition of an exhibitions, B2B or B2C, held at the EMECA venues in 2022.

13 submissions from 8 different venues in 5 countries had been received following the call for submissions launched among EMECA venues only. All applications presented appealing concepts, demonstrated innovations, ambitious economic plans and their impact. The jury was thrilled by the high number, the variety and quality of the applications received. EMECA President Roland Bleinroth gratefully indicates: *"We would like to thank all applicants and encourage them to follow the path forward in collaboration with the EMECA venues."*

During the EMECA General Assembly taking place in Basel on 16th – 17th May 2023, Raccoon Media Group was awarded of this exclusive award and honoured by the representatives of the major exhibitions centres in Europe.

Roland Bleinroth adds: *"The EMECA jury was impressed by how the community was built in a creative, inclusive and diverse way. The interactive activities implemented both inside the halls and outdoor went well beyond other similar industry events. We also appreciated the comprehensive sustainability measures, carbon footprint measuring and ambitious goal to be a net zero carbon event in 2025. All in all, this a role model for organiser-venue collaboration, we congratulate Raccoon Media Group as well as the NEC Birmingham."*

EMECA AISBL

Rue de l'Amazone 2
B-1050 Brussels
Tel +32 2 535 7250
info@emeca.eu
www.emeca.eu

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Mike Seaman, CEO Raccoon Media Group commented: *"It was vital for our event that in designing our exhibition, we create and exude an inclusive and inspiring community feel rather than just an event. We're delighted that the EMECA judges picked up on that, as well as our detailed sustainability measures. The 2022 show saw us ditch aisle carpet for the first time, working with a carbon auditor to measure, monitor and reduce our carbon impact. The second edition has just taken place in March this year with even bigger success, large rebooking numbers and expansion plans of 50% plus floorspace for next edition. We now plan to expand internationally with the National Outdoor Expo in Boston, USA, in 2024."*

Kelly Haslehurst, Marketing Director for Conventions & Exhibitions at the NEC, said: *"We are proud to host such great content and innovative new launches at our venue and The National Outdoor Expo is a prime example of this. We're excited for the success of The National Outdoor Expo going forward and can't wait to see how it grows and develops. This internationally recognised award is testament to the hard work of Raccoon Media Group and our NEC venue team who frequently pull out all the stops to make each event in the calendar a memorable one."*

Photo enclosed:

Becky Humphries, NEC Group Head of PR and Communication
Roland Bleinroth, EMECA President and CEO Messe Stuttgart

About The National Outdoor Expo and Raccoon Media Group:

The date of The National Outdoor Expo was the 18th-19th March 2023. The expo takes place at the NEC Birmingham and 2023 was the second edition.

Further information can be found at www.nationaloutdoorexpo.com and you can contact Hannah.hopwood@raccoonmediagroup.com for further details and images of speakers/previous events.

The event is organised by Raccoon Media Group Ltd., a dynamic, high-growth media business focused on enabling healthy and active lives. Its CEO and founder Mike Seaman set up The National Running Show in 2018. The business has expanded significantly since then and is now a multi-platform media business that serves passion-lead, self-identifying consumer markets in the health and well-being space.

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About the NEC

As one of Europe's leading event destinations, the NEC offers flexible space for organisers to host any type of event – from ready-made layouts to blank canvases that spark innovation and creativity.

The NEC is the UK's largest exhibition venue with 18 interconnecting halls comprising 182,000sqm of flexible exhibition space, in addition to over 387 acres of hard-standing ground and 59 acres of woodland. The venue welcomes around 2.3 million visitors and over 45,000 exhibiting companies to more than 500 events every year, including flagship shows BBC Good Food Show, Spring Fair International, Motorhome & Caravan and Crufts.

Situated at the heart of the national motorway network and physically linked to both Birmingham Airport and Birmingham International Railway Station, 75% of the UK's population are based within a three-hour drive time of the NEC.

About EMECA

Before the pandemic, the EMECA Members hosted and organised nearly 2.000 trade fairs a year globally, out of which 1.550 in Europe on a gross rented space of nearly 38 million sqm. They welcomed nearly 500.000 exhibitors and roughly 38,5 million visitors in Europe.

The EMECA Members

Belgium:

Brussels Expo

Poland:

MTP Grupa, Poznan

Germany:

Deutsche Messe (Hannover),
KoelnMesse, NürnbergMesse, Messe
Stuttgart

Russia: Expocentre Moscow (currently
suspended)

Portugal:

Feira Internacional de Lisboa

France:

EUREXPO – Centre de Conventions et
d'Expositions de Lyon, VIPARIS, Paris

Switzerland:

MCH Group (Basel, Zurich, Lausanne),
Geneva Palexpo

Italy:

BolognaFiere, Fiera Milano, Rimini Fiera,
VeronaFiere

Spain:

Fira de Barcelona, BEC – Bilbao
Exhibition Centre, IFEMA – Feria de
Madrid, Feria Valencia

The Netherlands:

Amsterdam RAI, Royal Dutch Jaarbeurs
Utrecht

UK:

ExCeL London, NEC – National
Exhibition Centre Birmingham

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Press and media contact

Ms Barbara Weizsäcker, EMECA General Secretary

Tel. +32 25357250

press@emeca.eu

www.emeca.eu

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B-1050 Brussels
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