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Pharmagora, a showcase for French pharmacies

Every day four million French people visit one of the country's 23,000 pharmacies for a medical prescription or just for some advice. A success that means the pharmacist has to adapt constantly to a changing market.

Professionals of the sector, pharmacists, laboratories, logistics suppliers and even shopfitters, will be gathering at the 28th Pharmagora trade show at Porte de Versailles in Paris, from 6 to 8 April.



While the majority of exhibitors are European, 25% of visitors come from other continents, notably Africa. Indeed, a great many pharmacists in the Maghreb come to study in France before returning to work in their own country. All are attracted by this international meeting point introduced by the show's organisers three years ago. It provides a forum for the various players of Europe and Africa to exchange views, negotiate contracts and above all meet one another.

Among the exhibitors at this year's event, the traditional groups have of course responded to the call; this is particularly the case of the cosmetology laboratory Pierre Fabre, present through its flagship dermo-cosmetic brands (Avène and Ducray). Expanscience, which mothers will know under the brand name Mustela, is renowned in the field of dermatology, but also in the dental sector. "For our group, this show is a major event that opens international doors for us," explains Thierry Pelizzon, exports director at Pierre Fabre. "It therefore contributes to our objective of realising 70% of our turnover abroad between now and 2020".



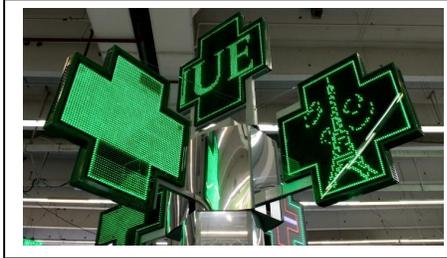
More surprising exhibitors

Alongside the traditional businesses of pharmacy and pharmacology, other sectors have put in an appearance at the show. This is the case of the shopfitting trade, represented by the groups Fahrenberger and Mobil'M among others. "This trade has taken off with the economic crisis, which has been affecting the pharmaceutical industry since 2010," according to the show's organiser. "Shopfitters try to optimise the space of the dispensary, or find solutions enabling the business to be better managed." All the more so since the market has grown with the arrival of generic drugs in the last few years. The listed products prescribed by doctors and collected from pharmacists continue to grow in number.

"A good number of pharmacies now have conveyor belts to retrieve the medicines," points out the show's organiser. "This method saves considerable time and space. This is the kind of solution pharmacists come to

presence.
The pharmacy world is also welcoming other service providers, such as the manufacturers of vending machines for siting outside pharmacies, for condoms for example, or signage manufacturers for the design of the traditional luminous green cross.

A changing profession



These new types of exhibitors are not there by chance. The profession of pharmacist is set to change over the next few years. Like other business sectors, the economic crisis has also affected the dispensary sector, notably due to a very strong contraction of the drugs market.

Nearly 150 dispensaries went bankrupt in 2012. To alleviate this difficulty and make pharmacists less dependent on the fluctuations of the market, the State and professionals of the sector have sought to diversify the sources of pharmacists' income by allowing them to combine remuneration in the form of fees with their traditional sales mark-up. Pharmacists are now entitled to carry out new functions, such as screening for diabetes or the monitoring of patients suffering from chronic diseases. In the face of this increase in their range of tasks, the working methods of pharmacists are also changing. *"The trade show should enable them to develop their shops at the same pace as their profession"*, the show's organiser tells us.

The event's organisers are expecting 20,000 visitors compared to 18,000 in 2012. They are also looking to the social networks and on-line television, Canal Pharmagora, which they have developed in order to reach more and more professionals.

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