

INTERVIEW

In this interview, Renan Joel of Easyfairs talks with ONdrugDelivery about the upcoming inaugural Connect in Pharma conference in Geneva. Mr Joel gives insight into what the conference has to offer attendees, the organiser's track record and future ambitions for Connect in Pharma.



RENAN JOEL,
DIVISIONAL DIRECTOR,
EASYFAIRS

Renan Joel is Divisional Director of Packaging at Easyfairs, working across an international portfolio of agenda-setting packaging events in the UK, France, Switzerland and Italy. His comprehensive approach to connecting suppliers with key players has helped build a platform that will drive collaboration and business for Europe's pharmaceutical community.

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Q To begin, could you give us an overview of the Connect in Pharma conference? What should attendees expect to experience and what should they expect to take away after having attended?

A Connect in Pharma is a new event for the pharmaceutical and biotechnology community, organised by Easyfairs, a leading international events company. It is the first event exclusively dedicated to the entire pharmaceutical manufacturing value chain, with the inaugural event taking place in Geneva on September 14-15, 2022.

Attendees can expect to find a programme that includes a range of opportunities to learn about the latest advances and trends through plenary conferences, workshops and networking events. This new event presents pharma companies and their suppliers with an unrivalled opportunity to discover and shape the future of their products and the wider sector.

Like all Easyfairs events, Connect in Pharma aims to ensure people feel energised by the conversations and mix of people in the room. We have a track record of bringing a buzz and excitement to our event spaces. This also means ensuring that visitors find plenty of opportunities to network and mingle. Visitors will find a champagne bar right in the middle of the hall, a photography exhibition, an awards ceremony highlighting innovations in sustainable packaging and more.

The photo exhibit is something I am particularly excited about. We are working with SbD Creative (Mold, UK) to launch a multimedia exhibit called "Days of Rare", which will feature photos and video interviews with individuals affected by rare diseases. It is part of a charity initiative we have formed with EspeRare (Geneva, Switzerland), a not-for-profit organisation that develops and promotes access to life-changing treatments and technologies for patients affected by rare diseases. For every visitor who walks through the conference

doors, Easyfairs and Connect in Pharma will donate five Swiss francs to EspeRare.

I think everyone who attends Connect in Pharma can expect to find something that inspires them, someone who has a solution to a technical challenge and a host of new ideas to take away with them.

Q Could you talk about how you decided on packaging, drug delivery and contract manufacturing as the scope for Connect in Pharma? Also, please could you tell us why you decided on Geneva as the location for this year's show?

A We worked closely with a newly formed advisory board to identify four key areas in the European pharmaceutical market. These main themes – innovative packaging, drug delivery systems, contract manufacturing and the filling and assembly process – are key areas that players in the pharmaceutical sector are increasingly focusing on, looking towards integrated solutions to reduce time to market. This event looks at everything downstream of the molecule. In other words, once the science has been done, companies need to invest in getting that molecule into a form that can be delivered in a safe and reliable way to a patient.

Modern pharmaceutical businesses are looking for the most effective way to bring their products to market against the backdrop of an expanding and ageing population, growing disruption in international supply chains and a growing trend towards small batch production. Having the right drug delivery system, filling and finishing vials in a sterile environment, packaging and outsourcing are all important components of that process. There is a vibrant community in Europe making extraordinary advances across all these areas.

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It is crucial that businesses in the pharmaceutical space find the best solutions for drug delivery devices and packaging, and that they find out about the latest innovations to remain competitive in a fast-paced global market. Geneva is the perfect location to bring together key influencers from leading pharmaceutical groups, biotech companies, industry clusters and suppliers. Before deciding to launch any new event, our team at Easyfairs conducts thorough market research to map out our target audience, and it quickly became clear that Connect in Pharma would have to be in Geneva, given its geographical proximity to so many important players in the sector, from large corporations to small start-ups and biotech clusters. It is the geographical heart of pharmaceutical production in Europe.

Q The key attractions at Connect in Pharma are the conference agenda and the exhibition, can you give us some more detail on each of these?

A The exhibition hall will host about 100 exhibitors, including BD (NJ, US), Essentra Packaging (Nottingham, UK), Unither Pharmaceuticals (Aimens, France), Catalent Pharma Solutions (NJ, US), Gerresheimer (Düsseldorf, Germany) and many more. This is the ideal location to explore solutions for pharmaceutical packaging, medical devices and manufacturing challenges.

The plenary conferences are all about helping us think about the European pharmaceutical sector of tomorrow. Organised as four half-days, the conference programme will give the floor to experts working at the forefront of pharmaceutical development in the main areas of the pharmaceutical supply chain: packaging, medical devices, sub-contracting and equipment. Visitors can hear from experts on a range of topics, from cybersecurity, through patient-centric design to the economics and geography of innovation.

The workshops are 45-minute sessions, giving visitors access to experts who can provide insight and advice on finding technical solutions to problems. This part of the programme is intended to provide representatives from pharmaceutical and biotech companies with the opportunity to interact with different suppliers to better understand the best practices and challenges of their suggested solutions.

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We are also dedicating a portion of exhibitor space to highlight innovation. This will allow participants to hear from exhibitors demonstrating their latest innovation or technology in short, 15-minute segments. This will be a way for visitors to learn about the latest innovations and find new suppliers and partners.

Q As Connect in Pharma is a brand-new event, can you tell us a little more about the organiser, Easyfairs?

A At Easyfairs, we organise over 200 face-to-face events in 14 countries, primarily in Europe. We have a long-standing track record of running events in the packaging world, so we knew we were well placed to serve the pharmaceutical sector as well.

We serve communities by giving them a vision of their future, helping them foster connections and offering them a life-changing experience through a core focus on new technologies and innovation.

The team at Easyfairs is passionate about “easifying” the life of our customers. What this means is that we are looking to increase the return on time and investment for professional communities through our “all-in” formulas, advanced technology and customer-centric approach. At Easyfairs, our goal is to harness new technology and innovate to make “being there” an exciting experience.

Our digital features and initiatives provide these communities with excellent opportunities to network effectively

and do business throughout the year. We listen carefully to create compelling online formats that meet customers’ constantly evolving needs.

Q What are the medium-to-long-term plans for Connect in Pharma? Where do you see the event in four or five years’ time?

A We know it usually takes a few years for any new exhibition to become established, but we are confident this edition will be a huge success for us and we are ready to invest in the medium and long term to ensure this happens with Connect in Pharma. Nevertheless, we are very impressed by the results we have already achieved in our first year. While we expect to have about 100 exhibitors this year, the venue at Palexpo has the capacity to accommodate larger exhibitions, and we anticipate that the number of exhibitors and visitors will grow by 50% for Connect in Pharma’s second edition.

We are always looking at ways to build our community. While Connect in Pharma will remain a live, in-person, Geneva-based event, we are looking at ways to use technology to create meaningful and useful information services around the event.

In four or five years’ time, we expect to be the market leader in this space. Our aim is to make Connect in Pharma an annual event that is not to be missed by suppliers, specifiers and other influencers involved in pharma and biopharma packaging, devices and production. Easyfairs is an ambitious company and, when we enter a market, we are in it for the long run.

Connect in Pharma will take place in Geneva, Switzerland, on September 14-15, 2022. Follow the link to find out more: www.connectinpharma.com



Renan Joel
Divisional Director Packaging
– UK, France, Italy & Switzerland
E: renan.joel@easyfairs.com

Easyfairs
Rue Saint-Lambert 135
1200 Brussels
Belgium

www.easyfairs.com



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