

From First Launch to Permanent Presence: A Study on the Mechanisms of Trade Shows in Promoting the Long-Term Development of the First-Launch Economy

Shufeng Tao

Liaoning University of International Business and Economics, Dalian 116052, Liaoning, China

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Abstract: The first-launch economy has become an important lever for consumption upgrading, industrial development, and urban development capacity. As key platforms for information exchange and brand communication, trade shows are naturally well suited to displaying new products, new technologies, new services, and new models. In practice, however, some first-launch activities at trade shows remain limited to concentrated displays during the event. The conversion of first-launch outcomes is insufficient, and the function of empowering industrial development has not been fully realized. Drawing on value co-creation theory and research on innovation ecosystems, this study offers an in-depth analysis of the logic of converting first launches into permanent presence. The study argues that permanent presence has two dimensions. One is the continued dissemination and trading of first-launch outcomes after the exhibition. The other is the actual implementation of these outcomes in the host city so that they can effectively empower local industrial development. Promoting the long-term development of the first-launch economy requires work in four areas: brand consolidation, industrial transformation, ecosystem synergy, and institutional safeguards. Trade shows need to move from being short-term display venues to becoming hubs for the conversion of first-launch outcomes, with greater attention to long-term development.

Keywords: First-launch economy; Trade shows; Permanent presence; Sustainable development

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1. Introduction

The first-launch economy is a strategic economic process in which firms introduce new products, new business formats, and new technologies. Its scope covers a chain-like development path from initial release to the establishment of R&D centers and corporate headquarters^[1]. Today, the first-launch economy has become an important driver of consumption upgrading. Trade shows offer an important platform for exhibitors to launch

and display new products, new technologies, and new services for the first time. Yet trade shows cannot be viewed merely as short-term display platforms. Their role in promoting industrial development in the host city deserves fuller attention and fuller release. Many trade shows now focus on the number and scale of first launches. They still pay limited attention, however, to the long-term presence of the new products, technologies, and services launched by exhibitors during the event ^[2]. There is also much room to improve how first-launch products, technologies, and services drive local industrial development. This limits the deeper contribution of the first-launch economy to local development. This study focuses on two issues. One is how trade shows use network building, resource integration, and information spillovers to turn the short-term traffic of the first-launch economy into long-term brand value. The other is how first-launch products, technologies, and services launched during trade shows can continue to empower local industrial development, thereby supporting high-quality urban development.

2. Theoretical foundations

Trade shows are important platforms for value creation ^[3]. They are not just isolated promotional events. Exhibitors, visitors, organizers, service providers, and public agencies all bring in resources, information, and market feedback. Their interaction creates value. The organizer does not create value alone. This view matters for the first-launch economy. A new product may get initial visibility at a trade show. But its commercial value depends on what happens after the event. Can the contacts, feedback, and cooperation formed during the show be sustained? The key issue is not just attracting participation. It is turning short-term encounters into lasting market relationships. The innovation ecosystem view extends this point. Trade shows bring firms, technologies, users, capital, and institutions together for a limited time. Their long-term importance lies in whether these actors stay connected after the event. In this sense, moving from launch to permanent presence depends on continuous resource exchange, knowledge flow, and opportunities for collaboration.

3. Practical obstacles to the sustainable development of the “first-launch economy” at trade shows

3.1. Temporal discontinuity: Difficulty in sustaining the momentum of first launches

Trade shows unfold in stages. Before the show opens, organizers attract exhibitors and build momentum. During the event, displays and transactions take priority. After it ends, information and contacts often disperse. Resources built up for the show can quickly fade. Many first-launch activities focus on ceremonies, media coverage, and visitor counts. They give much less attention to ongoing support. That support includes potential customers, professional buyers, and partnership projects. Short-term attention alone cannot sustain a first-launch economy. The real question is whether that attention can be kept. For trade shows, the closing day should not mean the end of service. Follow-up, order conversion, feedback collection, and preparation for future editions should all be part of the operational cycle.

3.2. Spatial disconnect: Disconnect between new product launches and local industries

When cities host exhibitions, they often focus on hotels, dining, transport, and short-term spending. They pay much less attention to links between exhibitors and local industry. Exhibitions become temporary gathering places. New products may be launched there, but they often fail to reach local firms, research institutes,

commercial channels, or consumers. The first-launch economy still faces several problems. Venues look alike. Market operation and maintenance remain weak. Supply and demand are poorly matched. Policy implementation also lags. If cities simply copy one another and chase first exhibitions, first showcases, and first stores, without tying them to local industry and resources, they may end up with launches that leave no lasting impact.

3.3. Disconnect among key stakeholders: Lack of coordination among multiple objectives

Exhibitors tend to pursue brand exposure, new customers, and closed deals. Organizers focus on exhibitor numbers, total visitors, and the event's reach. Local governments, meanwhile, watch investment outcomes, consumption data, and the city's image. These goals are not necessarily in conflict. Yet without coordination, efforts can scatter. Several conditions shape whether first-launch outcomes can be converted into lasting value. Firms need to stay invested over time. Exhibition platforms must keep serving participants after the event. Local governments need to offer stable industrial support and policy backing. High-quality growth in the first-launch economy also calls for closer integration of supply, organization, and demand. If exhibitions only rent out booths and event space, without connecting resources, first-launch events and ongoing business operations can easily drift apart.

4. A long-term development mechanism: From “premiere” to “permanent presence”

4.1. Brand consolidation mechanism: Turning a premiere into the starting point for iteration

The brand consolidation mechanism deals with a central question: how to keep the results of a premiere alive over time. At trade shows, companies meet industry professionals, potential customers, distributors, and peers face-to-face. Their feedback, questions, orders, and concerns give companies useful signals about market demand. A trade show debut can work as a market test. After the event, companies should sort the feedback they gathered. This helps them spot problems in product features, pricing, service flow, and promotion. They can then improve the product, adjust channels, and refresh brand communication. In this way, a cycle forms: debut, feedback, iteration, and relaunch. What matters here is not a longer promotion period. It is better interaction. Interaction among exhibition participants can build trust, commitment, and loyalty. Organizers should therefore set up a digital platform for post-event contact. Exhibitors should put post-event customer management in place. Professional buyers can also join product testing and joint development. Only when interaction continues beyond the exhibition and turns into long-term relationships can a product launch become brand equity.

4.2. Industrial transformation mechanism: Turning exhibition displays into local roots

The industrial transformation mechanism deals with a key question: how first-launch outcomes can benefit the host city. Trade shows offer a central platform for showing new industrial technologies, market trends, and supply chain needs. They give local firms a low-cost chance to watch industry changes, find potential partners, and reach high-end resources. The first-launch economy follows a chain-like path. It starts with initial launches and exhibitions. It then extends to flagship stores, R&D centers, and corporate headquarters. Trade shows can act as the entry point of this chain. Local governments and organizers should focus on key local industries. They need to identify first-launch firms and projects that fit these industrial directions. During the exhibition, they can arrange procurement matchmaking, technical exchanges, investment talks, and industrial park tours. After the exhibition, they should provide services such as project implementation, business registration, talent

recruitment, and supply chain matching. Industrial transformation is not just about attracting investment. More important is whether first-launch projects fit local industries. For example, cities with a strong manufacturing base can host first-launch projects in new technologies, new materials, and smart equipment. Cities rich in consumer resources can focus on brand flagship stores, new consumer experiences, and regional operations centers. The first-launch economy should follow a tailored approach based on local conditions. It should not chase a uniform first-launch label.

4.3. Ecosystem collaboration mechanism: Turning short-term events into long-term networks

The ecosystem synergy mechanism addresses the question of who drives permanent presence. The long-term implementation and conversion of first-launch outcomes after trade shows requires joint efforts by organizers, exhibitors, governments, communities, and other actors ^[4]. For exhibitors, what matters is not only exposure during the event, but also the continued dissemination and conversion of their first-launch outcomes after the show. Their goal is to keep the launch visible, usable, and commercially viable over time. If trade show organizers take this need as a starting point, they can better help exhibitors achieve their goals. Organizers can provide services such as project screening, supply-demand matching, post-exhibition follow-ups, and ongoing media exposure. These services help connect exhibitors with potential partners, buyers, and investors after the event. Governments, in turn, need to maintain communication with organizers and help connect projects with local industrial priorities. For projects with high technological content and strong local industrial relevance, more targeted support can be provided. In this way, ecosystem synergy turns scattered post-show contacts into lasting cooperation and supports the long-term development of the first-launch economy.

4.4. Institutional safeguard mechanism: Transforming short-term activities into full-chain services

The institutional safeguard mechanism is the foundation for the stable operation of the four mechanisms above. An effective first-launch economy needs policy, funding, innovation, demand, and traffic to work together. Together they form a development path: institutional safeguards, innovation-driven growth, market selection, and traffic conversion. For trade shows, institutional design must cover three stages: before, during, and after the event. Before the event, a mechanism should be set up to select and incentivize first-launch projects. Evaluation criteria should not look only at brand recognition. They should also consider innovation, industrial relevance, and long-term conversion potential. During the event, a regular supply-demand matching mechanism should be established. It should help buyers, investors, industrial parks, research institutions, and exhibitors communicate in depth. After the event, a project tracking system should be created. It should record order conversion, cooperation progress, technology implementation, and regional investment for first-launch projects. At the same time, permanent presence should not be equated with administrative intervention. The government's main job is to create a fair, stable, and transparent business environment. It should also provide public services and basic platforms. Whether firms invest, and how they carry out projects, should still depend on market demand and corporate strategy. A strong first-launch economy also requires better supporting industries. The government should offer macro-level guidance and avoid excessive intervention.

5. Pathways to promoting the long-term development of the exhibition debut economy

First, a full-cycle operation mechanism for first-launch results from exhibitions can be built. Organizers can

connect four stages: screening before the exhibition, launches during the exhibition, follow-ups after the exhibition, and later development work. For key first-launch projects, a project database can be set up. It can help track market feedback, cooperation needs, and progress over time.

Second, promote precise alignment between exhibition themes and local industries^[5]. Cities should select exhibition directions based on their own industrial foundations. Exhibitions cannot be organized in isolation from industry, nor can the implementation of new product launches be discussed without reference to industry. Only when exhibition themes, local industrial chains, and consumer scenarios are mutually aligned are new product launches more likely to achieve lasting success.

Third, improve the “exhibition + industrial park + enterprise” follow-up system. Exhibitions are responsible for aggregating resources; industrial parks for hosting projects; leading enterprises for coordinating supporting services; research institutions for technical cooperation; and financial institutions for providing funding support. This approach transforms casual contacts made during the exhibition into stable collaborations beyond the event.

Fourth, optimize the evaluation criteria for the “first-launch economy.” Exhibitions should not measure success solely by the number of product launches, media exposure, or on-site foot traffic; they must also focus on long-term indicators such as post-exhibition orders, collaborative projects, repeat participation rates, technology commercialization, and industrial implementation. Only when the evaluation criteria are adjusted will exhibition organizers and local governments place greater emphasis on the value of “sustained impact.”

6. Conclusion

The first-launch economy matters for more than one-off buzz. Its real value comes from turning innovative achievements into consumption upgrades, industrial synergy, and urban development. Trade shows are a key platform for first-launch events. They should move beyond their old role as temporary exhibitions. They should also support market testing, resource matching, industrial networking, and project commercialization. This study treats permanence as having two dimensions. One is the continuous iteration of corporate achievements. The other is the local integration of the host city’s industries. For trade shows to support long-term development of the first-launch economy, four mechanisms must work together. They are brand consolidation, industrial transformation, ecosystem synergy, and institutional safeguards. Brand consolidation provides the micro-level foundation. Industrial transformation is the core objective. Ecosystem synergy is the operational prerequisite. Institutional safeguards offer long-term support. The shift from first launch to permanent presence is not just about extending the buzz of one exhibition. It is about turning the event’s innovation momentum into long-term value. That value should be shared by enterprises, industries, and cities. Only when exhibitions are truly embedded in local industrial development can the first-launch economy move from a fleeting breakout to sustained taking root.

Disclosure statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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