

Ottowitz came on board with the company in April 2004, eight months prior to the next trade show. Through his efforts, the number of American companies attending the show jumped from three to eight and another 23 companies were on hand, represented by distributors.



“This was an incredible performance by any standard considering that it was achieved in eight months in a political climate in which American companies were reluctant to come anywhere near the Middle East,” said Iqbal Siddiqui, exhibition manager for the trade show. “He is making a huge contribution to the American horse industry by assisting United States companies dealing with equestrian products and services to enter new markets. He is an asset to the industry.”

Ottowitz calls upon his marketing skills and contacts within the industry to push his efforts forward. He developed a newsletter, detailing the conditions in Dubai and providing information about travel and life in that country. He also uses direct mail and telemarketing.

Most of his efforts are directed toward English product manufacturers, strap goods makers and similar companies.

Ottowitz admits he’s had a number of calls from people accusing him of being unpatriotic, but he believes in the product.

“Companies getting in now don’t face any competition,” Ottowitz explained. “This is a great opportunity for them to get a leg up in a very lucrative part of the world. They have money and they’re willing to spend money.”

Ottowitz says his primary challenge is helping Americans overcome the fear of being in the Middle East. He told of one company that had agreed it would like to come for the trade show, but no one on staff would volunteer to go.

The Al Fares show resembles American trade shows in

most aspects. It’s also a good opportunity for companies to find distributors.

“You don’t need to go every time the show is held to find a distributor, but you do need to go once to see how much business is there,” Ottowitz said.

The government in the United Kingdom sponsors trade missions to shows such as Al Fares Dubai, and Ottowitz would like to see the U.S. Department of Commerce do the same. He’s had little success so far in persuading them to do so.

“It’s like pushing on a string,” Ottowitz said.

Difficulties aside, the job allows Ottowitz to keep in touch with an industry he loves and make new friends along the way.

Best of the Best continued >

Peter Ottowitz works as the American sales rep for Al Fares Dubai Trade Show from his home in rural Massachusetts.



Trade Show Details

Sixth International Equine Trade Fair
 Dec. 11-13, 2006
 Dubai International Exhibition Centre
 Dubai, United Arab Emirates
www.alfajer.net

