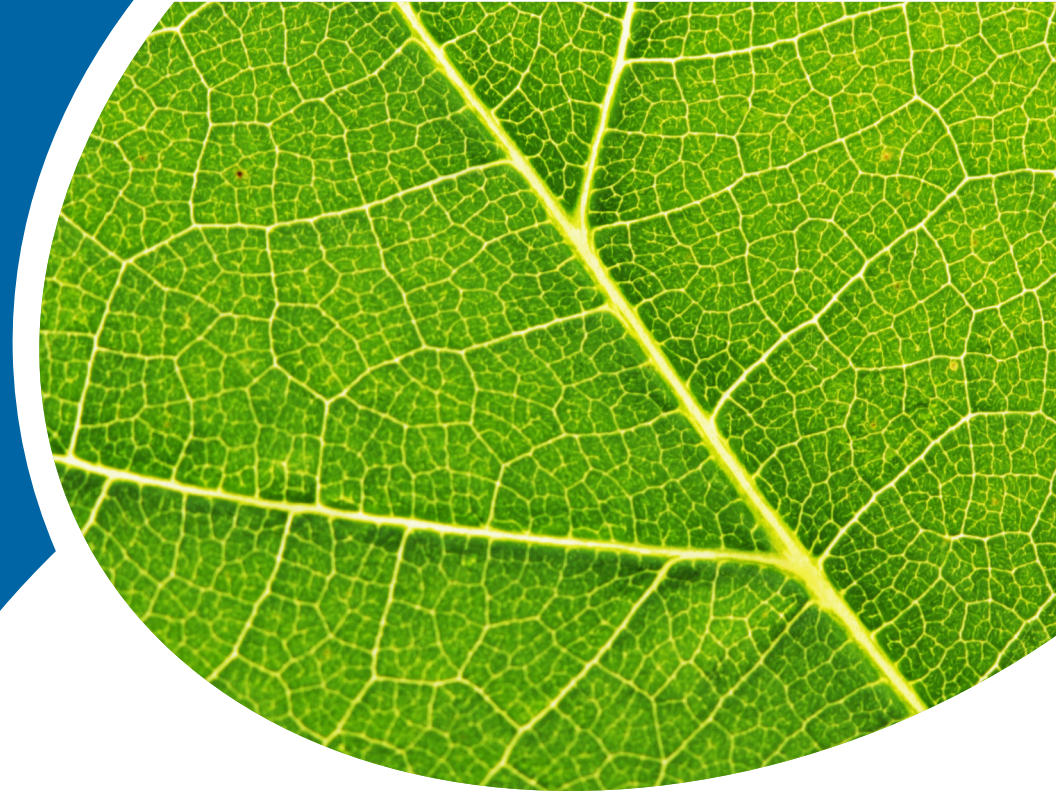




Food ingredients
Europe

Putting **sustainability** at the heart of business



How smaller
companies can make
their presence felt
at events



A SUCCESS STORY

Fi Europe provides a strong platform for businesses to promote their strengths and values. **Maurizio Decio, CEO at Alojás**, Sustainability Partner at Fi Europe 2021 discusses the importance of being visible, how smaller companies can make their presence felt at events, and why the food industry should be prioritising sustainability.



**MAURIZIO
DECIO**
CEO, Alojás

Key Takeaways

1. Visibility

Give an online trade show the same importance you would to a live event. Adapt to the unique dynamics of a digital event, using available online tools to create a quality experience for attendees.

2. Preparation

You need to take the time ahead of the event to do the work beforehand and schedule appointments.

3. Size doesn't always matter

Having the largest booth doesn't necessarily mean you will have the best show. People will visit you if you do the work beforehand and are prepared for the event.

4. Sustainability is key

Companies have targets for sustainability. Now is the time to make sustainability part of the core values of your business.

Tell us a little about Alojas – what sets your business apart from competitors?

Alojas was founded 30 years ago as the first Latvian international food industry joint venture, with the employee cooperative 'ALOJA', a Swedish farming cooperative.

In 2021, Latvian-based company IRLMD Food Solutions acquired the majority stake in Aloja Starkelsen, with the aim of transforming the business into a science-based, sustainable processor of crops. For example, most of the crops we process grow within a 400km radius of our factory.

Sustainability is now a core brand value, and we think about delivering solutions rather than ingredients.



Why did you decide to become a Sustainability Partner at Fi Europe?

We were in the process of rebranding the company from being a leading organic company focused on the potato sector, to one that focuses on broader plant-based solutions with sustainability at the core.

To achieve this, we wanted to take a three-pronged approach: through marketing, tradeshow and certification. Being a Sustainability Partner fitted with this approach.



Overall, how successful was Fi Europe 2021 for you?

The event was very good for us; in fact, I've personally never had a more positive experience! We had a modest booth but enjoyed incredible attendance.

There was always a line waiting to speak with us.

I think that the Fi Europe marketing team did an excellent job in preparing a video about our company, so that attendees were able to understand what we were about in just a few sentences. I was very impressed.



"I've personally never had a more positive experience!"

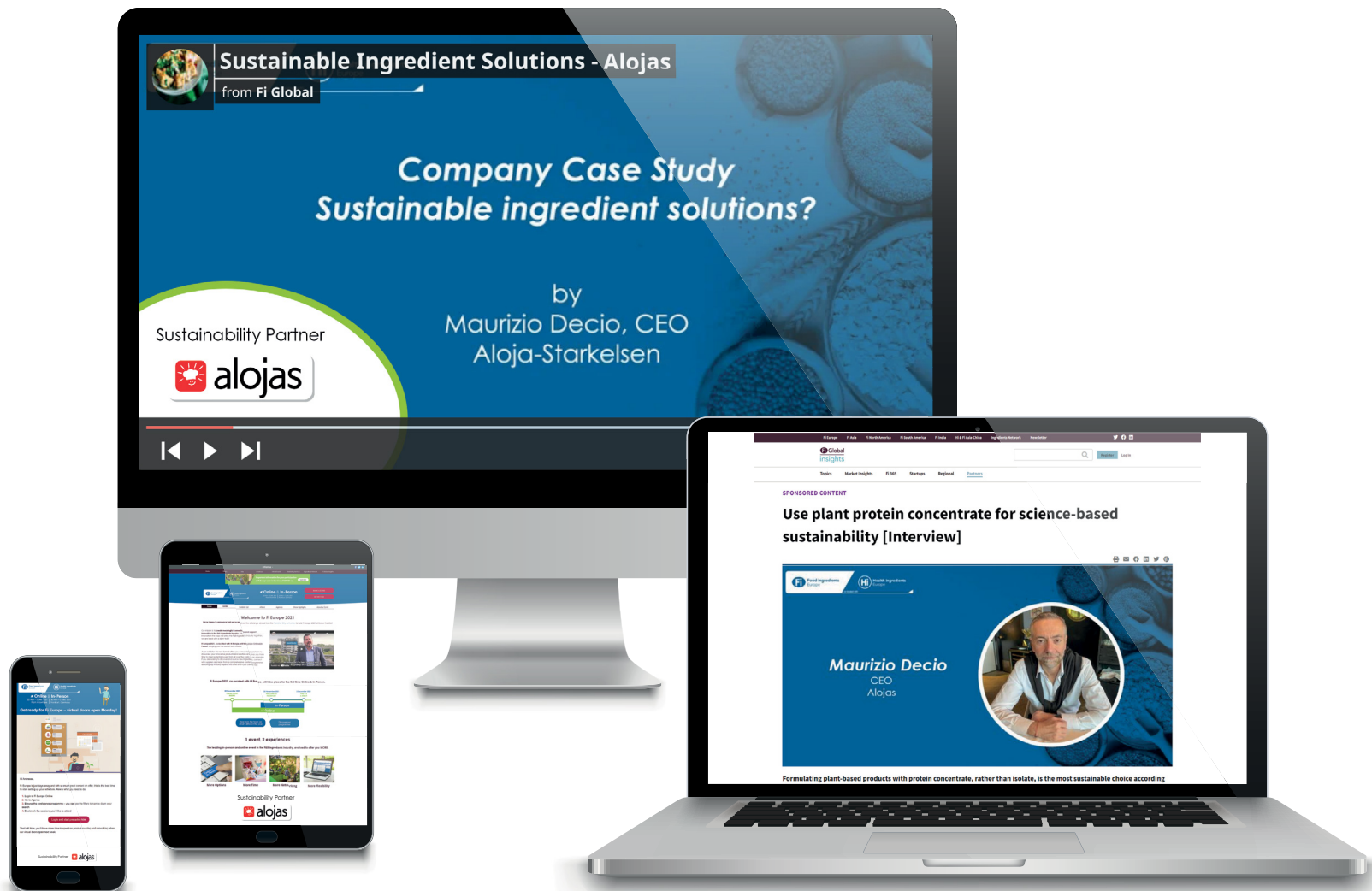
What were some of the main benefits of Online Sponsorship?

I think this worked well, as it increased our visibility and was perhaps one of the reasons why so many people came to see us.

Though of course, this is hard to measure.

One of the reasons I prefer face-to-face interactions is that you are able to get immediate feedback.

Though saying that, I was impressed with how Fi Europe organised the hybrid event; it looked like it worked out very well.



How did you measure the success of Fi Europe 2021?

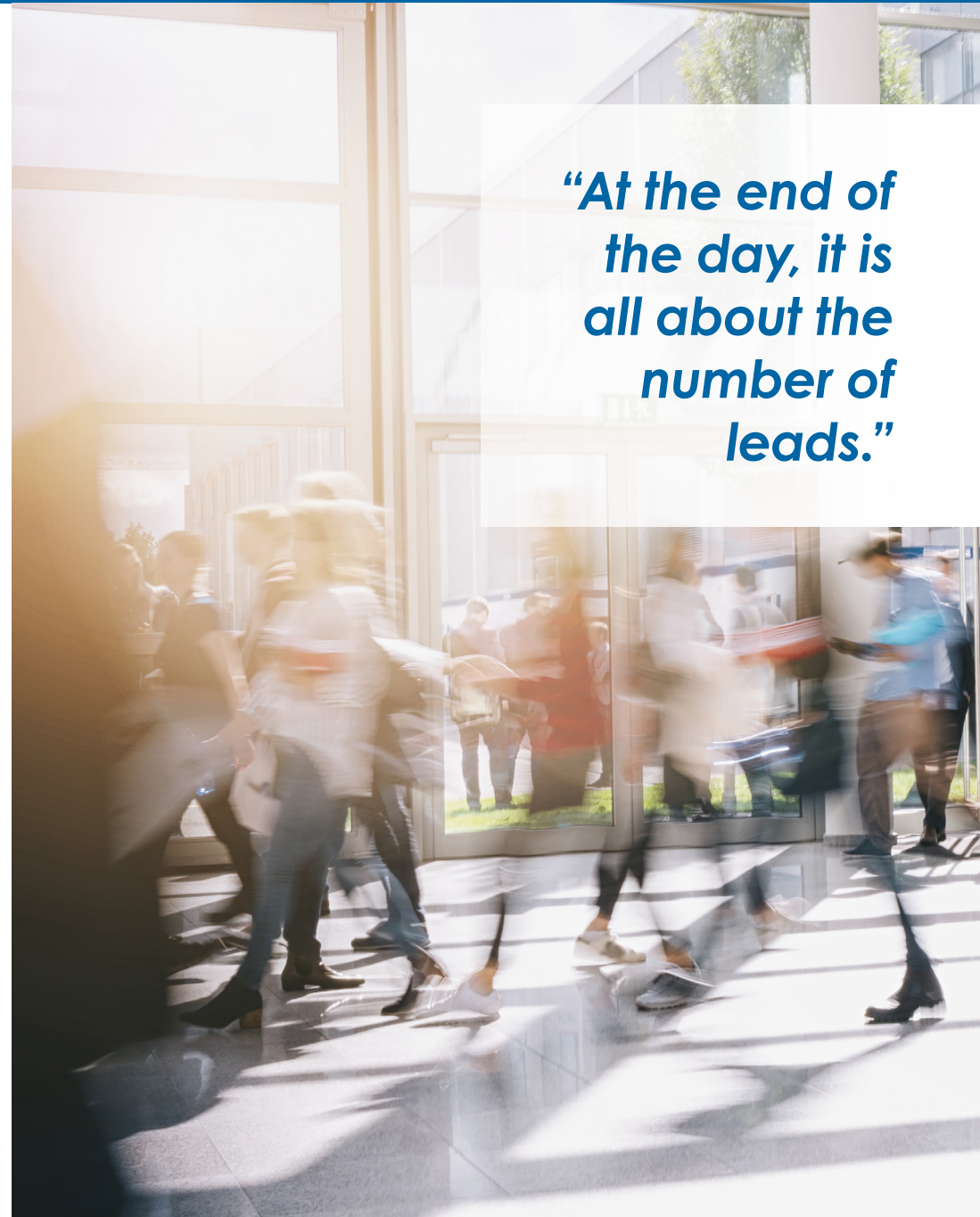
I think we were able to collect a list of between five to eight extremely important leads, and another 25 interesting leads. Our involvement also resulted in other partnerships and orders, which is a lot for a B2B company like us.

In addition, we had a lot of discussions that will likely materialise into actions later. If you are already a major company, attending an event like this is more like maintenance; everyone expects you to be there.

For a smaller company like us in the process of changing our image, it is critical that we are visible.



“At the end of the day, it is all about the number of leads.”



What advice would you give to exhibitors looking to get the most out of events?



Before attending the exhibition, ensure you have a balance of scheduled appointments and free time.

You need to schedule in time, or it will get messy, but if you organise too many meetings, you might miss the opportunities that come out of the blue. I would say that the size or position of the booth is not always that key.



“People will visit if you do the work beforehand. This is what I’ve learned.”

Why is sustainability such a central priority for your business?

In the sector we operate in – grains and legumes – sustainability is not yet a premium, but we are moving that way. Big customers, for example, have targets for sourcing sustainable ingredients, and we feel that legislation is moving in that direction. In that sense, we are ahead of the pack.

We are talking about economic sustainability as well; we bring benefits to local farmers, so our social impact in our community is large.



“We want sustainability to be a core value, not just for our business and our market, but for our planet.”



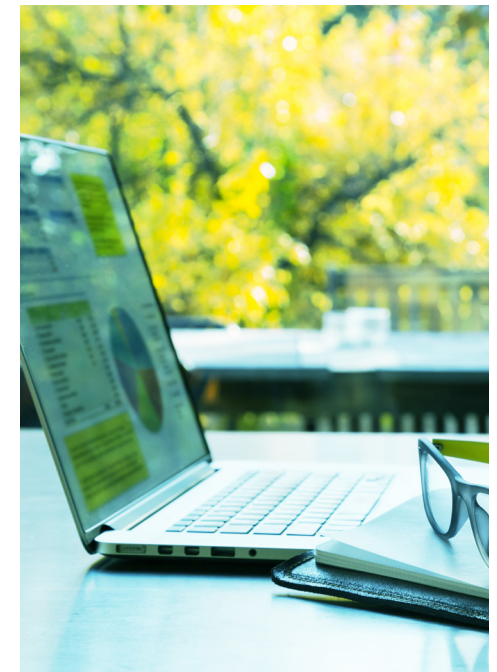
What next steps in terms of advancing sustainability can you tell us about?



One thing we are looking into is more meaningful ways to measure sustainability. Life Cycle Assessments (LCAs) for instance, are often open to too much subjectivity.

To this end, we are currently beginning discussions with Cork University in Ireland, as well as a local university here in Latvia, to develop a more rigorous approach. The point is that everything is dynamic and interconnected, from seeds through to processing and product applications.

In order to build up a meaningful measurement of the environmental impact, all factors and the whole life cycle of your product, even after it ends up in an application, should be taken into account.



What next?

Online:

28 Nov – 8 Dec 2022

In-Paris:

6 – 8 Dec 2022

NEW Venue:

Paris Expo Porte
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