Vertical Pro 2026 Stands its Ground in a Challenging Market Environment

- **Around 200 exhibiting companies from 27 countries, including 38 first-time exhibitors and 28 start-ups**
- **2215 trade visitors from 44 countries use the international trade fair to network and exchange ideas**
- **New formats and more than 70 program highlights provide fresh impetus for sport and industry professionals**

Friedrichshafen – The sixth edition of Vertical Pro once again brought together the diverse segments of the height access sector, from rope access technology, work at height and height rescue to tree care, climbing and bouldering gyms, high ropes courses and forest rope parks. Despite challenging economic conditions, the trade fair remained stable. Around 2,215 trade visitors from 44 countries (2025: 2,430) attended the international trade fair on November 13 and 14 to discuss the latest developments, discover new products and network across industry boundaries.

"Challenging economic times in particular highlight the importance of face-to-face interaction within the industry. This year, Vertical Pro once again demonstrated its importance as a key platform for networking and exchange among manufacturers, exhibitors and trade visitors. Despite a slightly lower number of visitors, it once again proved to be a resilient yet dynamic meeting place for the industry. We were particularly pleased with the high quality of the professional discussions and the international character of the event, both in terms of visitors and exhibitors," says Klaus Wellmann, CEO of Messe Friedrichshafen.

Project Manager Sharon Bareth is equally positive: "In the sports segment, Vertical Pro, together with Halls & Walls organized by the German Alpine Club DAV, has long been a must-attend event for the international climbing and bouldering gym industry. At the same time, we have further developed the event concept this year, bringing the sports and professional segments even closer

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together. The professional segment in particular has developed dynamically and was further strengthened by the addition of nine new exhibitors."

Around 200 exhibitors from 27 countries, including 38 first-time exhibitors and 28 start-ups, presented their products and services. Alongside numerous opportunities to test equipment directly at exhibitors' stands and in the Demo + Test Areas, the supporting program featured more than 70 sessions offering professional exchange and hands-on insights.

Professional segment expands its scope

The professional segment had a noticeably stronger presence at Vertical Pro this year. New exhibitors and numerous live demonstrations covering work at height, rope access technology and rescue created a lively atmosphere in Hall A6. Among the first-time exhibitors was the Kölner Seil Kommando with its mobile training truck. "For us, exhibiting at a trade fair for the first time was a thoroughly positive experience. We meet highly engaged industry professionals here who ask specific questions, so we can get straight into the details," says Training Manager Thomas Grögl.

The German Firefighters' Union (DFeuG) also made its debut as an exhibitor and partner. "We are very pleased with our first participation. The discussions with representatives from fire services, emergency medical services, height rescue and fall protection were consistently of a very high standard and opened up many interesting opportunities for further collaboration," explains Deputy Federal Chairman Yves Pasquini. The FSBS e. V., taking part for the third time, was equally positive: "It's quite a journey from Berlin to Friedrichshafen, but it's worth it every time. As a relatively small association, the trade fair is an important opportunity for us to showcase what we do and connect with manufacturers and other exhibitors," says board member Adrian Bleisch.

Petzl's new ZigZag Shift for tree care also attracted considerable attention, with live demonstrations on the climbing tree. "We are very pleased with our presence at Vertical Pro. We particularly value the diversity of the professional audience and the wide range of questions and requirements visitors bring. Our workshops have also attracted considerable interest," says Christoph Driever, Country Manager at Petzl Germany.

Feedback from exhibitors in previous years also helped shape the new hall layout for 2026. Previously focused primarily on the professional segment, Hall A6 featured more sports-related content this year. The Shoe Village was introduced as a new format, featuring brands such as La Sportiva. "My expectations were met. I had specifically arranged meetings with climbing gyms in advance, so my schedule was already quite full. Vertical Pro provides an excellent platform connecting brands with the climbing industry," says Simon Kreutz, Marketing DACH at La Sportiva.

Sporting diversity and inclusion take center stage

Halls A5 and A7, home to the German Alpine Club's (DAV) Halls & Walls, remained the sporting heart of Vertical Pro. Once again, the international climbing and bouldering gym industry came together here. Climbing gym operators, route setters and manufacturers exchanged views on the latest developments and tested new products. "Vertical Pro is an excellent platform for us to work with the various stakeholders in the industry to advance key issues in climbing. The atmosphere is shaped by the strong sense of community within the climbing industry. Vertical Pro is where the climbing community truly comes together," says Dr. Wolfgang Wabel, Head of Mountaineering at the German Alpine Club (DAV).

The DAV and the "Ich will da rauf! [I want to climb]" association also made inclusion a key focus of the program. The presentations and workshops explored ways to make climbing more accessible to people with different needs and abilities. The French company MBS Industry was among those presenting practical technical solutions to make climbing gyms more inclusive. "Our motorized auto-belay system opens up new climbing experiences for people with limited mobility. Climbing should be accessible to everyone, regardless of age, fitness level or physical limitations," says Thibaud Herr, Marketing Director at MBS Industry. Vertical Pro provides the company with an important opportunity to present its solutions to climbing gym operators and associations across Europe.

The experience of long-standing exhibitor ArtRock shows that direct contact with industry professionals is becoming increasingly important, particularly in challenging economic times. "Although we are currently seeing some caution in

the market, the discussions here are extremely valuable. Visitors come to us with specific projects and questions, highlighting the increasingly specialized nature of the trade fair," says Thomas Reichert, CEO Climbing Wall Design at ArtRock. Vertical Pro remains the company's most important industry platform.

CITYWALL was equally positive about the event. Among the products presented by the company were new PU climbing holds from the Illusion brand, which attracted considerable interest from industry professionals. "What we particularly value is the opportunity to meet our existing partners in person and show them our latest developments first-hand. Things that were previously often only discussed in video calls can be resolved much more quickly and easily here with the products right in front of us," says Urban Žajdela, Head of R&D at CITYWALL.

With fresh momentum from the two-day event, attention is already turning to the next Vertical Pro, which will take place on November 12 and 13, 2027.

For more information:

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About Vertical Pro:

Vertical Pro brings together all height professionals – from both the sports and professional sectors. The trade fair presents topics for operators of high and forest rope courses, climbing and bouldering gyms, people working at height, rescue and emergency response organizations. The focus is primarily on interaction: equipment such as ropes, climbing holds or carabiners as well as safety systems can be tested and compared in the Demo and Test area. The supporting program offers a wide range of opportunities for knowledge building and inspiration. The concept focus of Vertical Pro creates new synergies for sporting and industry climbers, providing the ideal meeting point for exchanging ideas across industry and country borders.

About Messe Friedrichshafen:

Messe Friedrichshafen GmbH is one of Germany's leading trade fair companies and is based on Lake Constance at the nexus of four different countries. Founded in 1950 to promote the region's economy, it has made a name for itself worldwide as an organizer and marketer of leisure and trade fairs. Congresses, corporate and sporting events as well as TV productions and live concerts complement the broad portfolio. Every year, Messe Friedrichshafen attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors and thousands of exhibiting companies from more than 100 countries to Lake Constance. A total of 87,500 m² of exhibition space spread over twelve exhibition halls and two multipurpose foyers as well as the two open spaces in the inner courtyard of 15,500 m² and the static display of 20,000 m² offer unique possibilities for eventful trade fair days. The compact exhibition grounds with their own lake in the immediate vicinity of the airport as well as halls with hangar doors allow for a wide variety of potential uses.