BOSTON -- The fall trade shows in the US have come and gone and, as usual, the up-and-down attendance was the story.

This year's edition kicked off in late September with the annual IPC Midwest and ended last week with SMTA International. Now that the attendance figures have been announced, we can see how the shows stacked up.

IPC Midwest, produced by IPC, reported just over 1,000 persons attended its annual event in the Chicago suburbs. Attendance was up 9% from last year, the trade group said.

The following week PCB West drew more than 1,250 attendees to its annual trade show and conference for printed circuit board designers, fabricators and assemblers. Attendance at the Santa Clara, CA, event was up more than 30% year-over-year, according to UP Media Group. (Disclosure: UP Media Group owns CIRCUITS ASSEMBLY.)

In early October, the annual IMAPS show came to Long Beach, CA. As senior editor Chelsey Drysdale noted, the week started strong but ended slow . As of this writing, IMAPS had not disclosed attendance figures.

Finally, last week, SMTA held its fifth annual SMTA International. The show has bounced between sites, having moved from Orlando to San Diego to Orlando and finally, this year, to Ft. Worth, TX. (It returns to Orlando in 2012.) Attendance was reported at 1,600, including exhibitors (excluding exhibitors and sales reps, attendance was about 840), a slight drop from 2010.

Five weeks, four shows. Because of the missing IMAPS figures, the combined attendance (including redundancies) cannot be calculated, but certainly exceeded 4,000. The numbers show Americans still do attend shows.

But the US is about to be outdone. More than 30,000 attendees are expected to turn out in

Munich in mid November for Productronica, the granddaddy of all electronics manufacturing shows. Perhaps Europeans really do it better.

2011 US Fall Trade Shows At-a-Glance

Show	Attendance	YoY Change	Primary Audience
PCB West	1,253	30%	PCB designers, fabricators, assemblers
IMAPS	n/a	n/a	Packaging engineers, academics
IPC Midwest	1,087	9%	PCB assemblers
SMTAI	1,600	-3%	PCB assemblers