

UFI data analysis provides picture of the global exhibition Industry - now and in the future

Paris/Singapore, November 12, 2010: On the occasion of its 77th Congress held from November 10-13 in Singapore, UFI, the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry has released industry information which provided sets of reliable data on the exhibition market and its trends, John Shaw, CEO, Comité des Expositions de Paris (France) and UFI President 2009, presented an analysis of updated UFI research covering 3 levels: venues, the events held in those venues and the companies who organize those events. Combined with the results of the Delphi Study which were presented by Prof. Joerg Beier, Cooperative State University Ravensburg, Germany, the information gives the first global picture of the state of the exhibition industry today and tomorrow. Some analysis of important trends has been drawn from the UFI membership data which, in the absence of other reliable global exhibition data, provides a very good indication of industry developments.

UFI members who operate venues, manage 200 venues. That is 10 more than in 2006 and 1 more is planned for 2012. Their total available exhibition space has grown at a global average of 3% a year during the 2006-2010 period. It is anticipated that this rate will slow down during the 2010-2012 period, to a 1% yearly growth rate. The different regional trends show UFI member venue capacity in Asia/Pacific reaching an almost 50% increase since 2006, whereas all other regions average only 10% in capacity growth.

In terms of exhibitions, consolidated data from more than 12,000 exhibitions shows a positive trend during the 2006-2008 period which came to an abrupt stop in 2009. The 2008/2009 level of activity was equivalent to that of 2006/2007. However regional variations should be noted with Asia/Pacific once again in the lead with an increase of more than 15% in the number of regularly organized exhibitions as compared to a stable market in the MEA and a slight decrease in exhibitions organized in Europe and the Americas.

Drawing on the findings of UFI's Global Barometer research which has been conducted regularly since late 2008, it can be noted that the impact of the economic crisis on exhibit organizer turnover also reflects regional differences. The MEA region appears to have been least affected on average, with a minimum of 50% of the companies declaring an increase during almost all periods. For the other regions the return to increased turnover varies from the 2nd half of 2009 for Asia/Pacific to the 2nd half of 2010 for Europe. Projections for the first half of 2011, indicate that the percentage of companies declaring an increase in turnover varies from 64% for Europe to 71% for the Americas and 77% for

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Asia/Pacific. At the time of the last Barometer data collection in July 2010, the two regions where most respondents were declaring that their activity was still feeling the impact of the “economic crisis” are the Americas and Europe.

Looking forward, UFI’s Delphi Study examined 14 factor categories which could influence the future of the exhibition industry as it surveyed 115 international experts from 10 economic regions. After three initial study phases, the study retained five categories as those bearing the greatest interest to participants: new business models, social media and RFID, protectionism, competition, mergers and acquisitions.

Experts’ responses were most enthusiastic to the hypothesis that, “trade shows should become thought leaders in their markets”. That exhibitions should take the initiative to become “kings of content” which can then be leveraged throughout the year was seen as a desirable trade show function and a professional challenge which could be mastered in cooperation with other partners of the exhibition community. It would appear that instead of selling space the ability to supply clients with future-oriented information is seen as more and more important.

On other issues, nine of ten experts foresee changes to CRM programmes related to visitors with improved visitor databases, better understanding of the needs of visitors and new concepts for matchmaking expected to be in place by 2020. As one expert put it, “there are still too many visitors left who don’t catch the right business partners”. On the use of RFID there is significant agreement on its future application as a tool for entry systems and ticketing, guidance systems and onsite communications. On the issue of protectionism more than 50% of the participating experts agreed that they will have to offer special services to clients to facilitate visa access.

UFI Managing Director Paul Woodward, commented, “UFI’s findings are among the first to formally provide solid insight into the global state of the exhibition industry. It is UFI’s intention to continue to build upon these findings in order to develop in depth data and information. This research confirms the solid role of the exhibition industry within the global business community.”

Attached: Data on Global Exhibition Industry

UFI is the association of the world's leading tradeshow organisers and exhibition centre operators, as well as the major national and international exhibition associations, and selected partners of the exhibition industry. UFI's main goal is to represent, promote and support the business interests of its members and the exhibition industry.

UFI represents over 550 member organisations in 84 countries around the world. Almost 900 international trade fairs proudly bear the UFI approved label, a quality guarantee for visitors and exhibitors alike. UFI members continue to provide the international business community with a unique marketing media aimed at developing outstanding face-to-face business opportunities.

For additional information on UFI, its programmes and services, please go to www.ufi.org or contact:

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