

UFI announces "Future-Proof Exhibitions" as the main theme for its 2018 European Conference

- More than 200 industry leaders to meet in Verona, Italy, from 2-4 May
- Sessions to focus on changing event formats, consolidation, digital transition, and security
- Registrations are open at ufi.org/verona2018, early bird rates apply until 4 March

Paris – 1 February 2018: Registrations are now open for the 2018 UFI European Conference. Europe's most international exhibition industry event will be held in Verona, Italy, from 2-4 May, and hosted by Veronafiere. The conference will bring together industry leaders from across Europe and around the globe to support exhibition organisers, as well as venues and suppliers, on how to make their events future-proof.

The exhibition industry's landscape is shifting - traditional trade shows have become exhibitions, and in recent years have added conference and digital elements to serve their customers' expanding and changing needs. In parallel, and driven by a need from digital communities to meet face to face, hybrid formats have evolved - part festival, part conference, part exhibition.

Kai Hattendorf, Managing Director/CEO of UFI, commented "UFI's European Conference is known to deliver - on content, networking, and experiences. For Verona, we will once again bring together a great group of speakers, covering strategy as well as operational take aways - and mix their sessions with time and space for networking in one of the most beautiful cities in Europe."

Conference sessions will focus on changing event formats, on the continuing trend of consolidation in our industry, on the digital transitions, and exhibitions and event security. The programme will provide a mix of presentations and panels, together with "deep dive" sessions where participants can explore in greater detail single issues in smaller groups.

Speakers will include Terri Toennies, Executive Vice President & General Manager, LA Auto Show (USA), Chris Skeith, CEO, AEO (UK) and Richard West, Director of Security, Ascential (UK), who will join a panel discussion that focuses on security questions at venues and events and also cyber security.

Experts from UFI's Digital Innovation Committee; Matthias Tesi Baur, Consulting Partner, MBB Media (UK), Stephan Forseilles, Chief Technology Officer, Easyfairs (Belgium) and Gunnar Heinrich, CEO & Managing Partner, Adventics (Germany), who will lead the "Digital Disruption – meet the experts" session and provide an update on what is going on and what we can expect from the next waves of digital developments.

Francis J. Friedman, President, Time & Place Strategies (USA) will close the conference and invite participants to make sure their events are ready for the future and how they can remain relevant, competitive and financially successful in their transition to the digital future. Friedman will discuss why and how the exhibition industry must change.

Networking will take centre stage at various receptions and informal gatherings throughout the event. Fitness minded professionals can also join the sporting activities.

"Registration for UFI's European Conference is now open at ufi.org/verona2018. Early bird rates are available until 4 March, and I want to encourage everyone to take advantage of them", says Carine Sire, UFI's Regional Manager for Europe, and responsible for the event.

Besides the conference programme, a number of additional UFI meetings and activities are taking place. The UFI European Chapter meeting will focus on Data Protection and the UFI Board of Directors also meets on this occasion for its semi-annual meeting.

The 2018 UFI European Conference coincides with Veronafiere's 120th anniversary. Veronafiere is a UFI member since 1932, only 7 years after UFI itself was founded.

Attached: UFI European Conference 2018 key visual

About UFI's Regional Conferences: As the Global Association of the Exhibition industry, UFI organises regular industry conferences in Europe, Asia-Pacific, Latin America and MEA in addition to the annual UFI Global Congress. The UFI European Conference is organised in May of each year and brings together more than 200 industry professionals from all over Europe and beyond. It has previously been hosted in Cologne (2017), Basel (2016), and Istanbul (2015). The conference is open to UFI members and non-members. Based on data from Explori, (UFI's global research partner), participants regularly rate the conference among the very best opportunities for industry networking and best practise learning in the industry. UFI's European Conference is among the top events globally when it comes to peer-to-peer recommendations.

About UFI - The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry: UFI is the leading global association of the world's 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 directly represents around 50,000 exhibition industry employees globally, and also works closely with its 58 national and regional association members. More than 700 member organisations in 85 countries around the world are presently signed up as members. Over 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.

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